ESSAYS IN CRITICISM

VOL 28
1978

0778५२

PR
809·05
ES7E.28

PR
809·05
ES7E.28

गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय
कृपया पुस्तक के ऊपर कोई निशान आदि
न लगायें।

पुस्तकालय विभाग
गुरुकुल काँगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय, हरिद्वार

PR
संख्या 809.05
ESTE:28
आगत संख्या......

पुस्तक वितरण की तिथि नीचे अंकित है इस तिथि सहित 15 वें दिन तक यह पुस्तक पुस्तकालय में वापिस आ जानी चाहिये। अन्यथा 10 पैसे के हिसाब से विलम्ब दण्ड देय होगा।

077842

Stock Verification-20

COMPILED

स्टाक प्रमाणीकरण १९८४-१९८५

077842

COMPILED
72689

ESSAYS IN CRITICISM
A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF LITERARY CRITICISM

Vol. XXVIII January 1978 No. 1

Astrophil's Self-Deception

ALAN SINFIELD

THE idea that the speaker of *Astrophil and Stella* is meant to illustrate the errors of unregulated passion may raise some difficulties,[1] but it fits in with Sidney's other attempts to reconcile his humanist love of letters with his religious puritanism. In adapting the sonnet sequence to ironic purposes Sidney risked being misunderstood, since Astrophil has to give himself away in a manner that is both patent and psychologically plausible; he cannot rely on a narrator's corrective voice. Sidney's aim may partly be to enforce his critique of human passion by using first-person presentation to involve the reader with Astrophil's main characteristic—self-deception. At the same time, he wants us to see beyond Astrophil's ideas and emotions. The ironic gap between the speaker and the poet not only leads us to the ground of Astrophil's error, but also coincides with that between Astrophil's deceived and true selves.

The major theme of the early sonnets is the battle between right reason and Christian virtue on the one side, and sense and will on the other. Sometimes Astrophil confronts the issue, even though he cannot resolve it and ends by throwing up his hands: 'True, and yet true that I must *Stella* love' (5);

> I see my course to lose my selfe doth bend:
> I see and yet no greater sorow take,
> Then that I lose no more for *Stella's* sake.[2] (18)

In other sonnets the objections of reason and virtue are raised equally sharply but Astrophil shrugs them off with a witty evasion:

PR
809.05
Es7E.28

I sweare, my heart such one shall shew to thee,
That shrines in flesh so true a Deitie,
That *Vertue*, thou thy selfe shalt be in love (4)

Virtue would indeed love the deity, but not the god of the love religion. Christian priorities which love poets normally kept distant from their passion or which they sought earnestly to accommodate are brought to the fore and provocatively dismissed by Astrophil. In sonnet 10 he deals similarly with reason, declaring that on seeing Stella's eyes, 'Reason thou kneel'dst, and offeredst straight to prove/By reason good, good reason her to love'. The tricksy antimetabole tells us that this is not an adequate treatment of the subject.

In sonnets 4 and 10 Astrophil pretends to have repelled the claims of reason and virtue, but we can see from his own seriousness in sonnets like 5 and 18 that this is unsatisfactory. The neat conclusions—that virtue and reason must endorse his passion—are plainly what he wants to believe: he is embarking upon a programme of self-deception. This has in fact been announced in the second sonnet:

I call it praise to suffer Tyrannie;
And now employ the remnant of my wit,
To make my selfe beleeve, that all is well,
While with a feeling skill I paint my hell.

Astrophil's attempt to make himself believe that all is well is of a piece with his promotion of will and sense over reason. In the *Old Arcadia* Euarchus warns the Arcadians not to expect too much of him as a judge, 'because it many times falls out we are much deceived in others, we being the first to deceive ourselves. . . . remember I am a man; that is to say, a creature whose reason is often darkened with error'.[3] Astrophil admits that his reason is darkened, and self-deception is an early consequence. Sidney's friend Philippe du Plessis-Mornay wrote a book entitled (in Anthony Munday's 1602 translation) *The True Knowledge of a Mans Owne Selfe* in which he analyses the effect of sensual desire: it

> signifies, not onely a moving of the hart . . . but likewise it is a privation and defect of light in the understanding, wherof ensueth ignoraunce of God and his wil, untrueths, boldnes to encounter with any of his inhibitions. . . . In these obscurities, our understanding loveth and conceiveth great admiration of him selfe, and of his owne wisdom, wexing bold to feigne oppinions of God, and to apprehend them after his own pleasure. (pp. 173–74)

Astrophil is bold to encounter with divine inhibitions; in fact he has so high an opinion of his own wit that he is prepared to challenge the commonplaces of contemporary doctrine, apprehending them according to his own wishes.

But although in the opening sonnets Astrophil tries to deceive himself that all is well, a few of them express his underlying awareness of his error. Such an alternation is both likely in itself and helps the reader to regard Astrophil's stratagems with suspicion. Sidney also introduces objections from others but these too are set aside with audacious irrelevance:

> Sure you say well, your wisdome's golden mine
> Dig deepe with learning's spade, now tell me this,
> Hath this world ought so faire as *Stella* is? (21)

The fundamental movement of the sequence between an expression of Astrophil's attitude and a critique of it is thus established. Hence the variety of tone. In some sonnets the demands of virtue and reason are stated (though not accepted) by Astrophil; most seem to be written wholly out of his commitment to love, sometimes with passionate seriousness, often with witty lightness. But the mood and tenor of these committed sonnets should not be taken in isolation. Though we are obliged initially by the first-person presentation to see through Astrophil's eyes, we are encouraged by the early sonnets on virtue and reason and then by other factors to trace Astrophil's self-deceptive manoeuvres back to the moral truth which provokes them. We perceive the alternative principles which he is attempting to avoid. Swings in tone therefore occur not only between successive sonnets, but also within a particular sonnet, as our initial attention to Astrophil's line is followed by an awareness of a further perspective. A jaunty dismissal of Astrophil's problems makes us so deeply conscious of those problems that the sonnet becomes quite grave; yet on rereading we cannot but pass through the light-hearted tone again.

For modern readers, especially those likely to read *Astrophil and Stella,* psychological and moral judgments tend to separate. This is because of the Romantic-Freudian tradition that profound psychological impulses are generally beyond our control. But in Sidney's time the two were indissolubly connected, for the reason was theoretically supposed to govern the passions (strict protestants declared that although failure was inevitable it was still inexcusable). Some recent critics think the rebellion of Astrophil's desire is meant to demonstrate the inadequacy of the theory, but I cannot believe that Sidney would choose a sonnet sequence as the appropriate form for a revision of some of the basic assumptions of contemporary Christendom. Astrophil's courting of self-deception should be regarded not as the result of an independent psychological imperative but as a wilful decline from virtuous conduct which is manifested psychologically. As Leland Ryken has pointed out, Astrophil seems to make a willed choice in sonnets 2 and 4; in 14 he asserts that if love is sin, 'let me sinfull be'. Only subsequently (e.g. sonnets 71, 72) does he find himself trapped by his earlier choices.[4]

Sidney's adaptation of the first-person sonnet sequence requires us first to participate in the thoughts and feelings of Astrophil, and then to penetrate them, so that we develop moral judgment through the exploration of psychological mechanism. The ethical structure of the sequence is therefore not an abstract system which is imposed upon the lover and his lady; rather the process of reading leads us to discover ethical principles within human motives and their consequences. How does Sidney make this happen?

Though the term 'reason' did not then have the limited ratiocinative sense it often has now, it was still deeply connected with logic. Abuse of logic helps Astrophil to deceive himself; but because we perceive his fallacies we become aware of his delusion. Astrophil likes hypotactic forms of syntax like 'If—then', 'Since—then', and 'Though—yet', which seem to assert that one thing follows from another, but often it does not follow at all. In sonnet 25 he founds an elaborate argument upon the Platonic notion that 'Vertue, if it once met with our eyes, / Strange flames of *Love* it in our soules would raise'. He proposes Stella as a Platonic absolute, uniting virtue and beauty. 'It is most true', he declares,

> for since I her did see,
> Vertue's great beautie in that face I prove,
> And find th'effect, for I do burne in love.

But the burning love he experiences is sensual: we see this to be a sham reconciliation with Platonism, a play upon different meanings of the word 'love'. The problem of virtue remains for us—though not, it seems, for Astrophil.

Notice also the expression 'I prove': Astrophil likes analytical terminology, but any mention of 'proof' or 'cause' means that he is about to be blatantly illogical (as in sonnets 4 and 10). In sonnet 74 he enquires exuberantly into the cause of his eloquence:

> Guesse we the cause: 'What, is it thus?' Fie no:
> 'Or so?' Much lesse: 'How then?' Sure thus it is:
> My lips are sweet, inspired with *Stella's* kisse.

In 102 the problem is the explanation of Stella's illness; Astrophil has 'feeling proofe':

> It is but love, which makes his paper perfit white
> To write therein more fresh the story of delight,
> While beautie's reddest inke *Venus* for him doth sturre.

He often uses the dissentany or differing argument—'Not this (or this) but that'. This enables him to reject reasonable hypotheses in favour of improbable conclusions which seem to endorse his passionate commitment. He says he was successful in a tournament not because of his talent or noble lineage (considerations which might remind him of his social responsibilities) but because Stella looked on

(41); but the reader remarks Astrophil's perverse priorities. A similar effect occurs when he praises Edward IV for his faith in love (which threatened the realm) rather than his kingly qualities (75). The narrator in the *Old Arcadia* observes that love brings with it 'all force of such arguments of which affectionated brains are never unprovided' (p. 185).

Some critics feel that these sonnets are too witty to be taken as exposing Astrophil's error. But jokes do not necessarily indicate frivolity; they may perform valuable psychological functions. Astrophil uses them to evade the awkward aspects of his passion, turning aside from unpleasant prospects, making light of them, putting a favourable construction upon them. The reader, however, sees what is going on and is aware of Astrophil's self-deception.

Once Astrophil has put behind him the objections of virtue and reason, the main difficulty he faces is the incompatibility of his wishes and Stella's. Sonnet 44 is one of many instances where he deals with it through humour:

My words I know do well set forth my mind,
  My mind bemones his sense of inward smart;
  Such smart may pitie claime of any hart,
Her heart, sweete heart, is of no Tygre's kind:
And yet she heares, yet I no pitty find;
  But more I crie, lesse grace she doth impart,
  Alas, what cause is there so overthwart,
That Noblenesse it selfe make thus unkind?

The first quatrain sets up a chain of reasoning which, reinforced by gradatio, ought to be unassailable; yet Stella does not show pity. The true 'cause' is that her very 'Noblenesse' makes her refuse to countenance illicit passion, but Astrophil prefers not to recognize this. He adopts instead a quite ridiculous explanation which he calls 'truth':

  I much do guesse, yet find no truth save this,
That when the breath of my complaints doth tuch
Those daintie dores unto the Court of blisse,

The heav'nly nature of that place is such,
That once come there, the sobs of mine annoyes
Are metamorphosd straight to tunes of joyes.

The origin of the idea is perhaps Petrarch's *Rime* 95, 'Così potess 'io ben chiudere in versi': if only he could capture the depth of his suffering in verse, then the cruellest person would pity him. But there Petrarch's incapacity explains his lack of success. Wyatt develops the theme in 'Passe forth, my wonted cryes', but he accepts that the lady is tigrish, hoping that her nature will change as his laments eventually win through. Sidney makes Astrophil contradictorily insist that his words set forth his mind and that Stella's heart is not tigrish. Confrontation with the wrong and inauspicious quality of his passion seems inevitable, but the joke enables him to evade it. However, for the reader Astrophil's insistence upon the 'heav'nly nature' of Stella's mind recalls the Christian objections he wants to ignore.

Sidney would have found a complete rationale for the tactical deployment of the joke in Cicero's account of why it is good for an orator to raise laughter:

> it shatters or obstructs or makes light of an opponent, or alarms or repulses him; and it shows the orator himself to be a man of finish, accomplishment and taste; and, best of all, it relieves dullness and tones down austerity, and, by a jest or a laugh, often dispels distasteful suggestions not easily weakened by reasonings.[5]

The opponent Astrophil wishes to discount is first virtue and then Stella; he evidently likes to present himself as a man of accomplishment and taste; he certainly wishes to tone down the austerity of Stella's response and dispel the distastefulness of her reasonable suggestions that he attend to his virtue.

Hence too Astrophil's use of Cupid. By adopting the impish child (hardly known in England before) he can express frustration whilst cultivating a casual and light-hearted tone. The mechanism is almost explicit in sonnet 11, where Astrophil exclaims, 'In truth, ô Love, with what a boyish kind/Thou doest proceed in thy most serious wayes'. The boyishness is, of course, attributed by Astrophil: it is he who wants to view his predicament in such a light. Often sonnets featuring Cupid alternate with serious analyses or alarming events, so setting up the characteristic tonal swing by which Astrophil's self-deception is made apparent to the reader. In sonnet 17 Astrophil's fall is presented as the accidental by-product of a most ungodlike family quarrel between Mars, Venus and Cupid: nothing very important seems to be happening. But the penetrating critique of sonnets 18 and 19 shows him unable to keep up this flippancy and the reader sees what is really at issue. Astrophil then withdraws once more into a lighter vein in the jocular sonnet 20, 'Flie, fly, my friends, I have my death wound; fly'.

There is a further clue to Astrophil's reliance on Cupid in a small change Sidney made when he revised the *Arcadia.* Erona was smitten with passionate love after she had pulled down the pictures of Cupid in her country. In the *Old Arcadia* the narrator comments, 'Then, lo, was Cupid's work well seen; for he had brought this miserable princess to such a case' (p. 68); but in the revision Philoclea remarks, 'Then lo if *Cupid* be a God, or that the tyranny of our thoughts seeme as a God unto us'.[6] Sidney evidently decided to make explicit the fact that Cupid is only a way of speaking about emotions for which the individual remains responsible. Astrophil leans heavily on Cupid as an explanation, even a justification of his passion. When in sonnet 20 he says that love lay in ambush for him he seems merely a helpless victim: it is a way of shifting responsibility. When in sonnet 53 he says that Cupid insisted he attend to Stella rather than the tournament he implies that he had no choice, but the reader sees his neglect of duty. The puritan Daniel Dyke scrutinized such areas of motive and expression in *The Mystery of Selfe-Deceiving* (published after his death in 1633). One manoeuvre he identifies as

> *Translation,* when by laying the fault upon some other cause, wee would altogether disburthen our selves thereof. Wherein the heart of man is so subtle, that if

> it can finde out any other thing or person, that in the least sort may seeme to be but the least piece of an occasion, that shal be sufficient to free it selfe of al manner of blame. (p. 138)

As the sequence develops, abstract questions of virtue and reason are submerged in Astrophil's mind (although not in the reader's) by the more practical problem of whether he will manage to persuade Stella to satisfy his desires. Typically, he deceives himself about the chances of success despite her discouragements. Astrophil now rarely raises problematical aspects of his suit, but they are kept before us by Stella's protests. She becomes the representative of virtue and, indeed, good sense in the poem, exposing by her firmness Astrophil's delusions about the value and prospects of his passion.

Stella's first stand provokes sonnet 46: 'I curst thee oft, I pitie now thy case, / Blind-hitting boy'. It is all wrapped up in the Cupid game, but Stella has threatened to deny Astrophil access to her 'If *Love* learne not alone to love and see, / Without desire to feed of further grace'. This provokes a fit of realism in sonnet 47: 'I may, I must, I can, I will, I do / Leave following that, which it is gaine to miss'; but it does not survive Stella's reappearance. In sonnet 48 he capitulates to her demands:

> Soule's joy, bend not those morning starres from me,
> Where Vertue is made strong by Beautie's might,
> Where *Love* is chastnesse, Paine doth learne delight,
> And Humblenesse growes one with Majestie.

The acknowledgement of Stella's virtue shows Astrophil attempting to see matters her way, but note the tone of desperation in the first line and the strain in the paradoxes. He does not want to believe that this is the last word on Stella's chastity, and as soon as sonnet 52 he renews his persuasions with a witty image of the strife between virtue and love as a law suit in which 'each pretends that *Stella* must be his'. He concludes:

> Well, *Love*, since this demurre our sute doth stay,
> Let *Vertue* have that *Stella's* selfe; yet thus,
> That *Vertue* but that body graunt to us.

In this sequence of sonnets we see a pattern which Astrophil repeats, each time at a higher pitch. Stella says 'No', he attempts to discount her seriousness with a joke, is perhaps obliged to grant her terms, but very soon is pressing harder, allowing himself to think that success is imminent. He declines to believe that Stella means her refusals. Astrophil's self-deception turns imperceptibly into deception or manipulation of Stella. The distinction in sonnet 52 between her 'selfe' and her 'body' is unappealing; compare Argalus in the *New Arcadia,* who rejects a beautiful replica of his supposedly dead betrothed, 'with whose beautie if I had onely been in love, I should be so with you, who have the same beautie: but it was *Parthenias* selfe I loved, and love' (p. 50). Astrophil is beginning to adopt the approach to love perfected by Ovid in the *Ars Amatoria*: the goal is sexual possession, pursued as a hunt or battle without regard for the lady's wishes. Astrophil's refusal to take 'No' for an answer is entirely characteristic. In the *New Arcadia* Sidney gives this attitude to the cynical and atheistic Cecropia:

> No, is no negative in a womans mouth. My sonne, beleeve me, a woman, speaking of women: a lovers modesty among us is much more praised, then liked: or if we like it, so well we like it, that for marring of his modestie, he shall never proceed further. Each vertue hath his time. (p. 452)

The pattern occurs again when Stella, under pressure from Astrophil's continuing importunity, insists once more on chastity:

> Now since her chast mind hates this love in me,
> With chastned mind, I straight must shew that she
> Shall quickly me from what she hates remove. (61)

Astrophil copes with this rejection as before—with frivolous illogicality and an appeal to Cupid:

> O Doctor *Cupid,* thou for me reply,
> Driv'n else to graunt by Angel's sophistrie,
> That I love not, without I leave to love. (61)

Stella has rigorously distinguished between chaste and unchaste concepts of love, but Astrophil purposefully tangles them up again in riddling language; he even has the effrontery to accuse *her* of sophistry. In sonnet 63 he blatantly takes Stella's 'No' to mean 'Yes' on the basis of the ancient joke about two negatives. He quotes the cry of triumph ('Io Paean') from the start of the second book of *Ars Amatoria;* he is the complete Ovidian lover. But, of course, the triumph is illusory, and after the extravagant compliments of the first song his confidence collapses; sonnet 64 fully acknowledges the force of Stella's objections—'No more, my deare, no more these counsels trie':

> Let me no steps but of lost labour trace,
> Let all the earth with scorne recount my case,
> But do not will me from my *Love* to flie.

The jests of 61 and 63 yield abruptly to reveal the emotion underlying them. Astrophil is turning this way and that, trying to believe that all may still be well.

Yet he is able to cheer himself up: he decides that he sees some hope—perhaps Stella is indeed touched by his suffering. The snag is that he needs to translate this into expectations of sexual gratification. He admits that the evidence is slight—a 'blush, which guiltie seem'd of love' (66)—but of course he favours the most optimistic interpretation. 'Hope, art thou true, or doest thou flatter me?' he asks:

> What blushing notes doest thou in margine see?
> What sighes stolne out, or kild before full borne?
> Hast thou found such and such like arguments?
> Or art thou else to comfort me forsworne?
> Well, how so thou interpret the contents,
> I am resolv'd thy errour to maintaine,
> Rather then by more truth to get more paine. (67)

Astrophil rededicates himself to error as opposed to truth. The narrator in the *Old Arcadia* observes: 'In such a mould are we cast that, with the too much love we bear ourselves being first our own flatterers, we are easily hooked with others' flattery, we are easily persuaded of others' love' (p. 206). Wishful thinking and disregard of Stella's wishes dominate Astrophil and lead to her final rejection of him in the eighth song.

When Astrophil is deep in illusion and least likely to express reservations about his passion Sidney brilliantly infiltrates evidence of Stella's reactions. Her harassed chastity is glimpsed through Astrophil's purposeful optimism. She urges virtue but he responds with a sexual pun:

> while thy breath most sweet,
> With choisest words, thy words with reasons rare,
> Thy reasons firmly set on *Vertue's* feet,
> Labour to kill in me this killing care:
> O thinke I then, what paradise of joy
> It is, so faire a Vertue to enjoy. (68)

When she again admits her chaste love he extravagantly rejoices (with a further echo of 'Io Paean'):

> *Stella* hath with words where faith doth shine,
> Of her high heart giv'n me the monarchie:
> I, I, ô I may say, that she is mine.

He mentions her proviso only casually in the last three lines and we observe his manipulative intention:

> And though she give but thus conditionly
> This realme of blisse, while vertuous course I take,
> No kings be crown'd but they some covenants make.
> (69)

By setting Astrophil's desire so starkly against Stella's values Sidney establishes her for the reader as a standard of virtue against which to judge the speaker's manipulation and self-deception.

The scope for interaction is increased and the issue of chastity sharpened when the relationship is moved on to physical contact by the kiss which Astrophil steals in the second song. His determination is apparent in the repetition of 'Now will I'; in the fifth stanza, moral objections are present in the word 'just' but they—and Stella's wishes —are considered only in so far as they might harm Astrophil's suit:

But ô foole, thinke of the danger,
Of her just and high disdaine:
Now will I alas refraine,
Love feares nothing else but anger.

In sonnet 73 we find that Stella is indeed angry, but Astrophil makes light of it in the usual manner: 'Sweet, it was saucie *Love,* not humble I'.

Everything seems to be working out as Ovid promised: 'Though she give them not, yet take the kisses she does not give. Perhaps she will struggle at first, and cry "You villain!" yet she will wish to be beaten in the struggle'. The next stage is sexual intercourse: 'He who has taken kisses, if he take not the rest beside, will deserve to lose even what was granted'.[7] So Astrophil regards the kiss as 'Poore hope's first wealth, ostage of promist weale' (79) and prays 'that my sunne go downe with meeker beames to bed' (76). The Elizabethan reader might recognize that Astrophil is falling into an established pattern. Robert Burton says in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* that Kornmannus 'makes five degrees of lust, out of Lucian belike, which he handles in five chapters, *Visus, Colloquium, Convictus, Oscula, Tactus*'. Such a notion of the stages of love was commonplace. Chaucer's Parson lists as the five fingers of the devil looking, touching, 'foule wordes', kissing and 'the stynkynge dede'; in Terence and Horace we find *aspectus, collocutio, tactus, osculum, concubitus.*[8]

Yet Stella's acceptance of the kiss need not be interpreted as the last step before bed, for kisses were allowed to Platonic lovers. Even Astrophil implies such a rationale on occasion: 'O kisse, which soules, even soules together ties' (81). These sonnets are laced with Stella's reluctance and protests, and the reader may well doubt whether she will prove as malleable as Astrophil and Ovid believe. She will not have her beauties published ('She builds her fame on higher seated praise'—81); she reproves him for biting (82—'Only beware lest snatching them rudely you hurt her tender lips, and she be able to complain of your roughness'—*Ars Amatoria,* I, 667–68). In sonnet 77, after describing Stella's parts which might be chastely enjoyed, he says her voice

Makes me in my best thoughts and quietst judgement see,
 That in no more than these I might be fully blest:
 Yet ah, my Mayd'n Muse doth blush to tell the best.

But Astrophil's 'best thoughts' are in full retreat and the risks he is running are conveyed indirectly through his coy warning to Stella's sparrow: 'What, doth high place ambitious thoughts augment? / Is sawcinesse reward of curtesie? . . . Leave that sir *Phip*, least off your necke be wroong' (83).

The culminating sign to the reader of Astrophil's self-deception is his outrageous confidence in sonnets 84 and 85 as he anticipates a private meeting. He fears that the experience will strain his heart and allots a role to each of his senses:

 But give apt servants their due place, let eyes
See Beautie's totall summe summ'd in her face:
Let eares heare speech, which wit to wonder ties,
Let breath sucke up those sweetes, let armes embrace
 The globe of weale, lips *Love's* indentures make:
 Thou but of all the kingly Tribute take. (85)

In the fourth song he does not think to argue his passion in principle, only noting, in Ovidian manner, that the circumstances are propitious. In the penultimate stanza he is reduced to violence:

Sweet alas, why strive you thus?
Concord better fitteth us:
Leave to *Mars* the force of hands,
Your power in your beautie stands:
Take me to thee, and thee to me.
'No, no, no, no, my Deare, let be.'

The dialogue form, stylized though it is and ambiguous in the last stanza (Stella does not want Astrophil to die), allows Stella her first chance of direct speech. Sidney thus breaks Astrophil's hold over the surface presentation of the ideas and events of the sequence, giving sudden release to the reader's sense that there is another point of view to be stated. Throughout we have felt that the ethos of the poem is dissociated from Astrophil, that we are supposed to 'see through' his attitudes; at last the alternative emerges, through Stella, into speech and action.

Astrophil's response to rejection is typically evasive. In sonnet 86 he is all injured innocence—'Alas, whence came this change of lookes?' He reassures Stella that he is faithful but that is not the problem; he attempts to play down the incident as he did the stolen kiss, but it seems not to work. In the fifth song his stored up resentment pours forth in a violent and sardonic outburst in which he admits that he has lived on his hopes: 'But now that hope is lost, unkindnesse kils delight'. He even blames Stella for drawing him from the path of virtue. Yet at the end he is prepared to set it all up again if only she will 'mend yet your froward mind'.

The sixth and seventh songs seem to be a further attempt to pretend at least that the relationship might be as Stella wishes, but in the eighth song he tries once more. This time Astrophil is not so clumsy as to assume Stella's assent—he woos her in most pleasant and attractive manner. But the poem has jumped into full third-person, past-tense narrative so that he seems strangely distant from us: '*Astrophil* with *Stella* sweete, / Did for mutuall comfort meete'. Now Stella has a lengthy and articulate response, as genuinely human as Astrophil's pleas. She goes so far as to call honour a 'Tyran', but her resoluteness vindicates feminine virtue against Ovidian slurs, confirming the reader's earlier estimate of Astrophil's self-deceptive manoeuvres.

Yet Astrophil does not forsake his habitual responses; the only change is that he hasn't the heart to try much humour. He tries to console himself by recalling Stella's tears (87), speaks of their separation as if it were temporary, staunchly denying any interest in other ladies (88, 91, 106), urgently asks news of Stella and whether 'her lips daignd to sweeten my poore name' (92), indulges in a fantasy of sexual union in the tenth song, watches Stella from afar (103, 105). The extent of Astrophil's continuing self-deception is shown by a further poem in dialogue, the eleventh song. His serenade of Stella is in keeping with his assumption that there may still be life in the relationship—just in the preceding sonnet he was talking of passing her window and wearing stars on his armour (104). But she could hardly be more off-hand: 'Why alas, and are you he? / Be not yet those fancies changed?' From this perspective we realize suddenly that there is little more to be said, and only four sonnets remain.

Yet Astrophil realizes nothing. He upbraids 'False flattering hope' (106) but only because Stella is not present. The last sonnet merely reshuffles the usual complaints; there is no moment of insight, not even such as he glimpsed earlier in sonnets 47 and 64. This has disappointed critics, anxious to see the protagonist learning through experience. Some have argued that Astrophil has indeed passed through a process of self-discovery, some have claimed that there is an abiding quality in his devotion, some have even tried to smuggle back into the sequence the sonnets 'Thou blind man's marke' and 'Leave me ô Love' as somehow appropriate though textually inadmissible.

It is his commitment to self-deception which prevents Astrophil from seeing things clearly; he is trapped by his initial choices. When he abandons right reason at the start of the sequence he forfeits the capacity to make a true analysis of his condition. In the penultimate sonnet he seems to want to end his dependence upon Stella but, absurdly, seeks to do so by appealing to her as 'Princesse . . . Of all the powers which life bestowes on me' to 'dismisse from thee my wit' (107). Only by accepting the rule not of Stella but of virtue, whose 'scepter' he repudiated in sonnet 4, could Astrophil regain control of his wit. How far he is from this is shown by his conclusion of sonnet 107, with a restatement of his devotion (he is her servant), a resentful glance at Stella (from his point of view it *is* her fault) and a further commitment to passion (he would not have it impugned):

> On servants' shame oft Maister's blame doth sit;
> O let not fooles in me thy workes reprove,
> And scorning say, 'See what it is to love'.

Astrophil has systematically employed his wit to make himself 'beleeve, that all is well' (2) and has resolved hope's 'errour to maintaine' (67). From this state, stern protestants held, there may be no return by human means. Joseph Hall declared that 'Custome of sinne hath wrought this senslesnesse, which now hath been so long entertained, that it pleads prescription, and knowes not to be altered'; William Perkins believed that 'custome in sinning brings hardnesse of heart; hardnesse of heart, impenitencie; and impenitencie, condemnation'.[9] The gradatio is more decisive than any of Astrophil's.

Sidney has contrived that the reader, although limited almost entirely to Astrophil's words, can see beyond them. An alternative standard intrudes persistently, at first through Astrophil's jocular and illogical attempts to fob off his own reason and his occasional self-indictment, and later through Stella's insistence upon their honour and Astrophil's wild optimism and blatant refusal to take 'No' for an answer. The sequence swings between our immediate apprehension of a situation as Astrophil views it and a further perspective that is beyond him. The shift between the two usually involves a tonal gap: we translate Astrophil's joke or hopeful prognosis into a revelation of his emotional needs and often into an adverse judgment—the judgment he is trying to avoid.

Our final reaction is likely to be mixed. We can hardly not be sad, for we have all the time looked over Astrophil's shoulder. We may feel, as Pyrocles says, that such love is 'a passion far more easily reprehended than refrained' (*Old Arcadia*, p. 392). But whilst Sidney has encouraged us by his use of the first person to find ourselves in Astrophil he has also prevented us from endorsing him. He has made Astrophil's self-deception yield psychological subtlety and yet placed it within a firm ethical structure. By an entirely original development of the sonnet sequence Sidney sought to satisfy both his love of poetry and his belief in its ennobling didactic power.

University of Sussex

NOTES

[1] See A. R. Howe, '*Astrophel and Stella:* "Why and How" ', *SP,* LXI (1964), pp. 150–69; A. D. Weiner, 'Structure and "Fore Conceit" in *Astrophil and Stella*', *TSLL,* XVI, (1974), pp. 1–25; J. J. Scanlon, 'Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*: "See what it is to Love" Sensually!', *SEL,* XVI (1976), pp. 65–74; and my own article 'Sexual Puns in *Astrophil and Stella*', *E in C,* XXIV (1974), pp. 341–55.

[2] *Astrophil and Stella* is quoted from *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney,* ed. William A. Ringler, Jr. (Oxford, 1962).

[3] Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia),* ed. Jean Robertson (Oxford, 1973), p. 365.

[4] L. Ryken, 'The Drama of Choice in Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella,' JEGP,* LXVIII (1969), pp. 648–54.

[5] Cicero, *De Oratore,* II, 236; trans. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham, 2 vols. (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1959), I, p. 373, p. 375.

[6] *The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney,* ed. Albert Feuillerat, 4 vols., I, *The New Arcadia* (Cambridge, 1912), pp. 234–35.

[7] Ovid, *Ars Amatoria,* I, 665–66, 669–70; *The Art of Love and Other Poems,* trans. J. H. Mozley (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p. 59.

[8] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy,* ed. Holbrook Jackson, 3 vols. (London, 1968), III, p. 65; Chaucer, *Complete Works,* ed. F. N. Robinson, 2nd edn. (London, 1957), p. 256; Terence, *Eunuchus,* IV, 2; Horace, *Carmina,* I, xiii. Terence and Horace are cited by T. W. Baldwin, *Literary Genetics of Shakspere's Poems and Sonnets* (Urbana, 1950), pp. 15–16; Baldwin finds the pattern frustrated in *Venus and Adonis.*

[9] Joseph Hall, 'Of the Profane,' *Heaven upon Earth and Characters of Vertues and Vices,* ed. Rudolph Kirk, (New Jersey, 1948), p. 176; William Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of Cases of Conscience,* in *William Perkins,* ed. Thomas F. Merrill (Nieuwkoop, 1966), p. 98. Both books were dedicated to Sidney's friend Lord Denny.

Pope and the Polite

TOM WOODMAN

THOUGH the process is difficult to pin down there is no doubt that power and influence in England in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries passed from the court and aristocracy to a wider élite which included them but also incorporated financiers and the more prosperous merchants. The effects of this change on literature were described long ago by Leslie Stephen as the change from the tastes of the court to those of the 'town', the 'town' being that sophisticated mainly urban élite which has adopted upper-class ways, but to which non-aristocrats may belong. This élite, which Ambrose Philips characterises as the 'middling gentry of a liberal education',[1] expanded the audience for poetry, an audience that was to make a genuine literary profession possible later in the eighteenth century. In the transitional period writers still expected court and aristocratic patronage, but they were also aware of this new reading public, a public from which substantial rewards could be obtained, like the £1,000 Gay got for his poems.

A central interest of the new élite was 'politeness'. As James Miller wrote in his poem 'Of Politeness' (1738), it was 'The Coxcomb's Av'rice, Courtier's claim / The Citt's Ambition, and the Soldier's Fame'. 'Courtesy', as Spenser had suggested, was 'of court' (*The Faerie Queene* VI. 1. i). Politeness, however, means 'polish', and could be achieved by those who were not aristocrats, as titles like *The Man of Manners: or Plebian Polish'd* (London, 1737) show. Addison and Steele wrote for this new audience, who are encouraged to see themselves as gentlemen, but its extension, of course, was severely limited. Politeness was in some respects a more democratic ideal than courtesy, but Shaftesbury in his recommendation of the free play of mind among gentlemen is careful to point out that the 'mere vulgar of mankind' must be excluded.[2] To be a member of the élite involves being *au fait* with polite literature, so that, as Samuel Garth notes, 'The Cits ne'er talk of Trade and Stock, but tell/How Virgil writ, how bravely Turnus fell./. . . The Lawyer for lac'd coat the robe does quit/He grows a mad-man, and then turns a wit' (*The Dispensary*, IV. 27–28, 31–32). At a deeper level, as has often been pointed out, politeness is a defence against the subterranean fears and conflicts of the period, and a way of avoiding offence in the alliances and social intermingling between interest groups who had been fighting each other sixty years before.

The political and social compromise meant a literary compromise between courtly and middle-class tastes, though in the earlier part of the century it was more a matter of the more affluent members of the middle classes imitating their social superiors. In the very early 1700s city poets like Sir Richard Blackmore, Defoe and Samuel Wesley attacked wit, which they associated with Restoration immorality and irreligion—'The Men of Sense against the Men of Wit/Eternal fighting must determine it'.[3] Significantly, Pope is prepared to allow some of these objections against wit in the *Essay on Criticism,* even though its defence is one of the poem's main objects. The new model is to be a revival of the old Horatian one of wit and morality combined, thus resolving the conflict between being a gentleman and being a Christian that some of these writers detected. These new compromises are apparent in a group of poets influenced by middle-class tastes though with a clear aristocratic and courtly bias. The first wave of them includes Granville and Walsh, Pope's earliest poetic mentors. The second includes his friends Gay, Prior and Parnell—much better poets. Two of the latter are, of course, associated with the Tory Scriblerus Club, where they mixed with aristocrats and where an unbuttoned wit was the normal mode. This freedom of manner, which does not exclude witty obscenity, links them with the Restoration court wits. They disapprove of the straight-forwardly didactic emphasis of the more middle-class poets, on whom Pope comments, 'Some who grow dull religious strait commence/And gain in morals what they lose in sence' ('Couplets on Wit', ed. Butt). But Pope and the others also show signs of the new moral respectability, a shift in public opinion most clearly

PR
809.05
EST E.28

seen in the Societies for the Reformation of Manners. It is connected with the rising prosperity of merchants and financiers, many of whom were Dissenters, and it gradually altered public taste. *The Scots Magazine* for 1739 says that: 'So far is the dirty ribaldry that once could alone please from being countenanced now, that seldom a *double entendre* is allowed . . .'[4] Pope can write a 'filthy simile' when the occasion demands but he also praises Addison's purity and Roscommon's 'unspotted Bays' (*Epilogue to the Satires, Dialogue II* ll. 171–184; *The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace Imitated* ll. 214–220). Prior likes to present himself as a man-of-the-world and is not afraid of obscenity, but he is decorous and oblique compared to Rochester. Granville's politeness is almost frigid, an exclusiveness that verges on the coy: 'Return, my Muse and close that odious scene / Nor stain the verse with images unclean'.[5]

077842

The verse of the Restoration court wits is wittily occasional, and sceptical about the higher flights of inspiration. Their religious scepticism and hatred for the zeal of the sectaries led them to link religious with poetic enthusiasm. As the Earl of Roscommon writes, 'Beware what Spirit rages in your breast / For ten inspired ten thousand are possest'.[6] A similar conjunction is seen in Swift, and it is not entirely arbitrary. For over a century Protestant writers had expressed disapproval of poetic fictions and of the invocation of the Muses. Milton rejects all muses but Urania. Even Dryden expresses reluctance about using 'Pagan machinery'.[7] But John Dennis and others were committed to the idea of poetic inspiration stemming from the Bible. The aristocratic party had to defend wit against the strictures of the middle-class men of sense, but they themselves often opposed the poetry of inspiration when associated with religious enthusiasm. As classicists they felt a reverence for the great poetry of the past that to some extent inhibits their own poetic ambitions. So in this period epics come from writers like Blackmore who shock the aristocrats by their absurd claims to inspiration and by their daring to write in such ambitious genres at all. Dennis is a 'modern', and in Swift's *Poetry, a Rhapsody* it is a Whig poet who 'for Epicks claims the Bays' (l. 295). In practice a suspicion of claims to poetic inspiration is widespread among the courtly poets. It combines with the philosophical scepticism of Rochester and others to produce a dislike of any large gesture in poetry, and with the new science and rationalism to reactivate the fear of poetry as fantasy, delusion and lie. Indeed, the Restoration court poets and later Swift can reveal a virulent hatred for the false sublime, and this is also the subject of Pope's *Peri-Bathous*. In the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* Pope himself is suspicious of 'Fancy's Maze' at the same time as he has to oppose those who 'call Fiction Lie' (l. 340., l. 302). In this context politeness is a matter of restraining the excessive flights of imagination and didactic zeal which take the poet outside the conversational norms and common sense established by Locke. The courtly poets also dislike being 'so grave as to be impolite', as Swift put it in *An Apology to the Lady Cartaret* (l. 8). Granville's *As Essay upon Unnatural Flights in Poetry* (1701) gives commonplace expression to some of these commonplaces of the period:

> But Poetry in fiction takes delight,
> And mounting in bold figures out of sight
> Leaves Truth behind, in her audacious Flight:
> Fables and metaphors that always lie,
> And rash hyperboles that soar so high,
> And ev'ry ornament of verse must die.[8]

In his notes we find that 'The poetic world is nothing but fiction; Parnassus, Pegasus and the Muses pure imagination and chimera'. If the courtly poets were sceptical of fiction and disliked 'inspiration' where they associated it with religious zeal or attempts to emulate the classics, and if the more middle-class writers argue for 'sense' against wit and disapproved of non-biblical concepts of inspiration, then it is clear that the social consensus established in the early eighteenth century was bound to be inauspicious in some respects for poetry, and in fact all the best poets of the period are uneasy about or even fearful of imagination, inspiration and the lies of fiction.

Since these poets were modest in their poetic claims, (not wishing to set up as competitors to the classical poets) and suspicious of the higher flights in themselves and in others, they were naturally appalled by the results when the 'moderns' did try to write ambitiously. Being themselves unlikely to embark on the full-scale or elaborately fictional kinds, they preferred to present their work in a self-depreciating way, and showed their poems as arising out of real social events. They publish, where they publish at all, under the title *Poems on Several Occasions,* suggesting that these are the polite diversions of an aristocrat who writes only 'occasionally' and who is most certainly not a professional poet, what Rochester (in *A Session of the Poets,* l. 24) calls a 'trader in wit'. They would have avoided the 'stigma of print' had not their friends begged them to publish.[9] They are politely self-depreciating about their work because they retain a proudly courtly *sprezzatura,* but at the same time they are disdainful of the professionals. Such attitudes were imitated by a professional literary man like John Oldmixon, who writes in the preface to his *Poems on Several Occasions* (1696) that 'Poetry has not been the Business of my life; I should reckon it among my misfortunes if it had'. Pope published Parnell under the *Poems on Several Occasions* title; both Gay and Prior also used it. Prior's preface puts himself in the same context as the Restoration wits. All three minor poets consciously assume a place in the Renaissance tradition of the noble amateur though all have middle-class elements in their background. Pope in the preface to his 1717 *Works* adopts the same pose of the gentlemanly, occasional poet. Poetry and criticism are 'only the affair of idle men who write in their closets and of idle men who read there'; he 'writ because it amused me [and] pleased such as it was a credit to please'. (p. xxv, xxvii) *The Dunciad* is full of an aristocratic disdain for professional writers.

A further change that reveals the emergence of the polite mode can be seen in love poetry. As poetic interest shifted from the court, so love poetry ceased to be addressed to court ladies. A real social deference was no longer appropriate: Prior addresses *Jinny the Just* and other poems to social inferiors whom he patronises as 'child'. The growing moral respectability puts a taboo on the expression of sexual passion. When Lady Mary Wortley Montagu writes to Pope enclosing some Turkish love poems she says 'Neither do I think our English proper to express such violence of passion which is very seldom felt among us'.[10] The climate of opinion is against the idea that a true glimpse of religious transcendence might be attained through romantic love—an idea more likely to be believed when attention is directed towards aristocratic ladies, or when neo-Platonism is fashionable. Middle-class influence means disapproval of courtly Platonic or transcendent or passionate attitudes to romantic love.

It is difficult not to see all these developments as linked. The new élite is based on the alliance of previously hostile interest groups. One side of it is suspicious of religious zeal, the other is more moralistic about sex. Both have their own reasons for being sceptical about poetic inspiration. In the most general terms the new consensus is too fragile and superficial to permit what the sociologist Peter Berger has described as any 'experience of stepping outside the taken-for-granted reality of everyday life, any openness to the mystery that surrounds us on all sides'.[11] Traditional ways of 'stepping outside' include self-loss through sexual passion, self-transcendence through romantic love, poetic vision, and religious transcendence. The new politeness restrains the enthusiasm that might link sexuality and religion, and substitutes for the Petrarchan 'adoration' of the lady, a modified and sentimentalised version of it. In Granville's work we see the hollowness of love conventions that imply the hyperboles of passion or the possibilities of transcendence in an age which is suspicious or disapproving of them. Granville addresses women in the Petrarchan courtly conventions but there is no longer the same meaning behind them. The old conventions change before our eyes into mere poetic diction—the 'enchantments' of a woman turn into her 'charms' in the weakened modern sense; the imprisoning power of love becomes the image of a woman who 'captivates us'. To Pope, Surrey was the 'Granville of a former age' (*Windsor Forest* 1. 292) but there is a world of difference between Surrey's real Petrarchanism and the pseudo-Petrarchan sentimentality of Granville's poems to Myra. The residue of the old courtly conventions means that Granville's exaggerated reverence for women is no more than polite.

Granville's diction exercises a great influence. Words and phrases like 'the fair', 'charms' and 'charming', 'captivates' and 'resistless' become pervasive in eighteenth century love poetry. Walsh's love poetry is also polite. He too shows signs of the increasing 'common sense' in attitudes towards love, and it is no accident that his most popular poem 'The Despairing Lover' concerns a lover's decision *not* to commit suicide. In 'To his Book' he praises a love built on esteem and judgement in a passage that deeply influenced Pope, a passage that is an amazingly cool and domesticated re-working of the Petrarchan tradition of a love that Reason and Virtue approve:

> Happy the man, and only he,
> Who with such lucky stars begins his love,
> That his cool judgement does his choice approve.
> Ill-grounded passions quickly wear away,
> What's built upon esteem can ne'er decay.

Walsh also reacts against the hollowness of the old love conventions by a new stress on sincerity, complaining that the moderns fill their verses with thoughts that are 'not tender, passionate or natural to a man in love'.[12] The taboo against passion, the new common sense, go together with an awareness of limitations. But we need to turn to Swift and Prior to find the poetic talent capable of writing convincing love poetry of a new kind. Swift resents sentimentality and epitomises the new honesty in the poems to Stella with her 'angel's face a little crack'd' ('Stella's Birthday, 1720/21'). Prior makes a central principle of his better love poetry the exploitation of the period's scepticism about fiction, and his awareness of the gap between literary convention and reality. 'I court others in verse; but I love Thee in prose'.[13] He strongly limits his range of reference, replacing transcendental imagery, which survives as late as Rochester, with domestic, and substituting tenderness for passion's hyperboles. Where Rochester writes

When wearied with a world of woe,
To thy safe bosom I retire
Where love, and Peace and Truth does flow.
May I contented there expire
Lest once more wandering from that Heaven
I fall on some base Heart unblest;
Faithless to thee, False, unforgiven
And lose my everlasting rest
('Absent from thee I languish still')

Prior in a presumably derivative passage simply says

So when I am weary'd with wand'ring all day
To thee my Delight in the Evening I come.
No matter what beauties I saw in my way
They were but my visits; but Thou art my Home
('A Better Answer')

Prior's elegy *Jinny the Just* fits the unromantic context of early eighteenth century love poetry—'Of such terrible beauty she never could boast/As with absolute sway o'er all hearts ruled the roost' (11. 37–37): the jaunty anapaests create a sense of the energy of Jinny's life and help to avoid sentimentality—we are only asked to 'Shed *one* pious tear upon Jinny the Just' (1. 96). The poem's honesty is like the remarkably tough straightforwardness of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's plea for a lover polite in public and honest in private, so that

. . . when the long hours of public are past,
And we meet with champagne and a chicken at last,
May ev'ry fond pleasure that moment endear;
Be banish'd afar both discretion and fear!
Forgetting or scorning the airs of the crowd,
He may cease to be formal, and I to be proud,
Till lost in the joy, we confess that we live,
And he may be rude, and yet I may forgive.
('The Lover', *Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*, pp. 212–213)

The complex of linked attitudes that I have called the polite mode deeply influenced Pope, for its prime examplars were his mentors and his friends. Indeed, much of his poetic career can be explained in terms of his dialogue with this tradition. But although he writes much occasional verse he also makes it clear that it is 'Not the task of an heroic poet to sing at marriages, funerals etc.' (*Correspondence,* ed. Sherburn, 1965, I. 465); if he adopts at times the pose of the gentlemanly amateur, he is in fact the first very successful professional poet in England, remarkable for his full-time dedication, the 'unweary'd mill of his verses' (*Imitations of Horace*, Epistle II. ii. 78). Even the 1717 preface with its occasional pose reveals an admixture of poetic dedication and the idea of the poet as moral hero. Elsewhere he was to ask: '. . . To write well, lastingly well, immortally well, must not one be prepared to endure the reproaches of men, want and much fasting, nay martyrdom in its cause' (*Correspondence,* II. 227). The imagery of Pope's Catholicism always clusters around the theme of his dedication to poetry. All the same this rendingly serious vocation can be combined with a prudent professionalism—it was, he said, 'purely the want of money' that led him to the Homer translations.[14] Both these attitudes are far removed from the polite occasional pose he elsewhere adopts. He often, indeed, attacks that attitude, scorning the 'Mob of Gentlemen who write with Ease' (*Imitations of Horace,* Epistle II. i. 107), and he remarked that Crashaw, Rochester and Dorset are 'holiday writers', 'gentlemen that diverted themselves now and then with poetry rather than poets'.[15]

Pope's earliest poetry falls into the tradition that several critics have called polite classicism, a reaction from violent political controversies of preceding years into a social retirement from political poetry. It is a period in which poets like Granville and Walsh follow Dryden into classical translation and imitate Waller and Cowley with decorously polite and mildly sentimental love poetry in praise of rural retirement. Pope adopts the more aristocratic and classical form of the pastoral, seeks correctness, 'elegant turns upon the words',[16] and adopts Granville and Walsh as his mentors. He displays politeness in the literal sense of polish, and the polite assurance that comes from addressing an inner ring of the tasteful and enlightened—his pastorals, says the proud introductory note, were read by 'Mr. Walsh, Mr. Wycherley, G. Granville, afterwards Sir William Trumbull, Dr. Garth, Lord Halifax, Lord Somers, Mr. Mainwaring and others'.

But the period of this restricted and formal literary politeness did not last long. The *Essay on Criticism* is certainly a poem of the polite mode, with politeness as both one of its main themes and one of its main strands of imagery—'As Men of Breeding, sometimes Men of Wit, / T'avoid great Errors must the less commit' (11. 259–260). It is a defence of poetry that acknowledges the social context of the period by accepting middle-class objections against 'Witt's Titans' (l. 552) and the immorality and irreligion associated with the Restoration court wits, and by incorporating a scepticism about poetry's truth and value—'Unhappy wit, like most mistaken things' (l. 494). However he defends wit against middle-class attacks by differentiating it from its abuses, and he tries to make it appeal to all by making it seem fashionable and polite: 'In words as fashions, the same rule will hold; / Alike fantastick if too new or old' (11. 333–334). The poem is an argument for consensus, urging good manners in critics, and making tolerant compromises. Nevertheless Pope's praise of poetry and his poetic aspiration differentiate him from contemporaries like Prior, Parnell and Gay. Like them he feels overshadowed by the classics, but he also dares to see himself as one of their sons and is not reluctant to aspire to inspiration:

> Oh may some spark of your Caelestial fire
> The last, the meanest of your sons inspire
> (That on weak Wings, from far, pursues your Flights,
> Glows while he reads, but trembles as he writes)
> (11. 195–198)

A similarly ambiguous development is seen in *Windsor Forest,* another classic of the polite mode. It hymns commercial prosperity, setting its hopes on the alliance between the commercial classes and the court that is the social basis of the polite mode. Its hero is Granville 'the polite', the courtier-politician famous for his occasional and sentimental verses. On the one hand, poetry seems a mere pastime compared to political and commercial realities: 'My humble muse, in unambitious strains, / Paints the green forests and the flowry plains' (11. 427–428). The praise it brings is 'empty' (1. 432). But on the other hand *Windsor Forest* yearns for inspiration ('Ye sacred nine! that all my soul posess / Whose raptures fires me and whose visions bless' (11. 259–260), and celebrates 'God-like poets' (1. 270), and poetry as prophecy, for Granville's (unlikely claim!) 'brings the scenes of opening Fate to Light' (1. 426).

Like *An Essay upon Criticism* and *Windsor Forest, The Rape of the Lock* is a poem about consensus and peace-making, an argument for good-natured reconciliation; it is eminently 'polite', with an occasional origin, a playful use of fiction and a moral lesson lightly conveyed. But it also shows a society's polite restraints and taboos losing touch with the natural purposes they subserve. Pope believes in the high Renaissance tradition that civility and ceremony enact man's true nature, but they can also grow over-ripe. This superficial ceremonial politeness is condemned by the moral criteria laid down by Clarissa. Beyond both is a moving, half-serious assertion of poetic inspiration and its power to defy Time: 'This lock the muse shall consecrate to Fame, / And midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name' (V. 149–150). Pope plays with mythology, as do those of his contemporaries like Prior, Gay, even Swift, who lean towards the courtly tradition and, although sceptical of fiction, will not forego its poetical pleasures altogether. Pope stellifies Belinda's hair playfully, but his assertions about poetry's memorialising power are serious.

In *The Rape of the Lock* the transcendence of man's everyday condition that poetry offers seems the only alternative to the fantasy of idolising Belinda. Belinda's beauty does *not* point beyond itself, and her crucifix 'which Jews might kiss, and Infidels adore' (II. 8) is denuded of significance. Pope attacks the sentimental idolising of Belinda, and recommends through Clarissa a good-natured politeness that heals conflicts. In *Eloisa to Abelard* too Pope analyses a situation in which passion is as inevitably frustrated as it is by the distorting taboos in the *Rape*, and in which sexual love does not lead to religious transcendence. Nevertheless, Pope sympathises with Eloisa's aspirations towards self-transcendence through passion or religion, as he does with the aspiration towards transcendence represented, though in a distorted form, in the attitude to Belinda. Only poetry, and that doubtfully, can fulfil such aspirations by eternalising some of Belinda's beauty. Only poetry can heal the conflict between passion and restraint in *Eloisa to Abelard,* for the 'well-sung woes will soothe my pensive ghost' (l. 365). In the *Elegy to the memory of an Unfortunate Lady* Pope goes further still—the lady seeks self-transcendence through passion, which her mean-minded society cannot tolerate, but Pope feels that her generous passion might provide her with a glimpse of religious transcendence too. 'Is there no bright reversion in the sky/For those who greatly think or bravely die?' (ll. 9–10). Apparently there is, for angels shade her tomb (l. 67). The last paragraph associates the poet and poetry with these generous gestures. In his sympathy for passion, religious transcendence, poetic inspiration, Pope goes beyond the bounds of the tradition in which he appears to be working.

Pope's common-sense love poetry is seen in several addresses to Martha Blount, but he never goes as far as Swift in the demolition of the old imagery. Nor does he allow it to degenerate into sentimentality. He tempers hyperbole and praise with scepticism and irony so that when 'Belinda smil'd, and all the world was gay' (II. 52), we know that the praise is genuine and yet that we are not to take the hyperbole literally. A courtly complimentary tone co-exists with common sense.

A similar complexity can be found in Pope's attitude to fiction and poetic inspiration. Such contemporaries as Prior, Gay and Parnell were sufficiently in touch with the older traditions to know that poets were meant to be 'inspired', despite their suspicions of the excesses of the biblical poets, so they worked themselves up to an elevated style and a forced inspiration on those rare occasions (such as Prior's *Solomon*) where they felt it incumbent on them. As James Sutherland noted, a gap is felt between their personal emotions and their elevated emotions as a poet. Pope bridges this gap by incorporating scepticism about poetry into his own work. When he does rise to the highest flights he is therefore more convincing.

Pope's letters as well as his poems express his period's doubts about fiction and poetic vision. One letter, for example, says that he has spent all his fiction in his poetry and now only has plain truth left for prose (*Corr.* II, 270). Yet in the famous letter to Judith Cowper he shows a yearning for fiction and romance, and the desire to write something the more wild and exotic the better (*Corr.* II, 202). Often his work depicts poetry as a false dream, and in Dullness's temple are found:

> '. . . the Fools Paradise, the statesman's scheme,
> The air-built castle and the golden Dream,
> The Maid's romantic wish, the chemist's flame,
> And Poet's vision of eternal fame'.
> (*Dunciad* III, ll. 9–12)

Peri-Bathous is entirely devoted to the topic of false inspiration. Yet Pope begs for a spark of celestial fire in both the *Essay on Criticism* and in his translation of the *Iliad*. He deals in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* with the assertion that fiction equals lie with the counter-attack '. . . he thought a Lye in verse or Prose the same, / That not in Fancy's Maze he wandered long, / But stoop'd to Truth, and moralised his song' (11. 339–41). In his early career, half in love, like his courtly colleagues, with fiction, he plays with myth in the way the polite mode permitted—the nymph Lodona in *Windsor Forest,* the sylphs in the *Rape of the Lock*. But in these two poems, as well as in the *Essay on Criticism,* he also takes poetic inspiration and dedication very seriously. In the later verse too, despite the alleged escape from Fancy's Maze, the debate about the worth of the poetic vision continues. Horace's 'To Augustus' is a sincere defence of poetry; Pope's imitation of it is ironic even about poetry, though he too rises to its defence.

Pope's deprecation of poetry is sometimes, especially in the early work, an aristocratic pose, a modified version of *sprezzatura,* as in the 1717 preface. At other times it represents his period's scepticism about fiction and poetic inspiration; at other times again it is moralistic, drawn perhaps from Catholicism—an assertion that he will choose perfection of the life and not the work (he writes to Fortescue that he wants to be delivered from rhyme in favour of the 'great business, that of enjoying a reasonable Being and regarding its End'—*Corr.* III, 486). But despite these attacks Pope also had a deep belief in poetry's truth and his self-dedication to it was complete. His best poetry richly reconciles these conflicts, integrating scepticism and inspiration, perfection of the life and of the work. His frequently expressed worries about the morality of making poetry the dedicated centre of a life are solved in the poetry by making self-presentation a moral weapon, by mythologising the life, presenting the satirist as a mythological moral hero. Pope manages to have it all ways —he is the aristocratic and leisured poet, he is the dedicated professional, he is the moralist who forswears poetry, and he is the moral poet whose life becomes art. In his later work, Pope's celebration of the role of the artist allows reality and myth to cohere. He becomes a poetic hero 'Arm'd for virtue when I point the pen', (*Imitations of Horace*, Sat. II. i. 105); the Heaven-directed' inspiration of satire unites poetry and truth, beauty and morality, so that 'Truth guards the poet, sanctifies the line / And makes immortal verse as mean as mine' (*Epilogue to the Satires,* II, 212, 214, 246–247).

By going beyond the bounds of the polite, Pope also reveals its limitations. In most of his work 'polite' is a term of praise, applied to Granville in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* (1. 135) or associated with Bolingbroke's example in the *Essay on Man* (IV, 382). But in the later poetry it often appears pejoratively—Timon's chaplain never mentions 'hell to ears polite' (*Epistle to Burlington,* 1. 150); Sir Balaam—'marries, bows at Court, and grows polite; / Leaves the dull cits, and joins (to please the fair) / The well-bred cuckolds in St. James's air' (*Epistle to Bathurst* 11. 386–388). The hypocritical friend in the *Epilogue to the Satires* praises Horace's 'sly, polite, insinuating style' (*Dialogue I*, 1. 19). The later poetry stresses the limitations of politeness—Timon's over-elaborate ceremonial; Atticus—'So obliging that he ne'er obliged' (*Epistle to Arbuthnot,* l. 208). And in the very last period of Pope's work it seems that he rejects it totally, as in the 'filthy simile' of the *Epilogue to the Satires, Dialogue II*. The first three books of the earlier *Dunciad* concern themselves with the threat represented by the hacks *to* the polite world—the way they bring the Smithfield muses to the ears of Kings. The added fourth book of the later *Dunciad* concerns the corrupted education of the upper classes. It is the corruption represented *by* the polite world that is now the problem. Pope's commitment to politeness is essentially moral. The connection between high social status and moral worth—the category Renaissance courtesy writers call 'gentle gentle'[17] is only an ideal one, set in a golden age, in the time of what Pope nostalgically calls 'Th'integrity of ancient nobility' (*Corr.* III. 52). The contemporary aristocracy has betrayed itself by alliance not with the commercial classes as such (an alliance praised in *Windsor Forest*), but with the 'moneyed men', the corrupt financiers. The social alliance that makes up the background to the polite mode has now become in Pope's later work the 'corrupt and corruptible world within the vortex of the Court and the City' (*Corr.* IV. 342). Pope puts the final weight on *moral* status not social, though the two ideally go together: he praises the 'ungentle gentle' and condemns the 'gentle ungentle'. In the *Epilogue to the Satires,* and in the Fourth Book of the *Dunciad* he condemns his society by its own ideal standards, and claims that he will write no more. Within the poetry itself, as has often been pointed out, there is no *radical* rejection of politeness. The shock of the 'filthy simile' depends on the very standards it breaks. The heroic couplet itself implies communication, intelligence, formality, and a certain politeness. The alliance between the upper and middle-classes that fostered the polite mode also gave him his audience, even though he came to condemn the controlling power of the Whig court and the financiers. Swift rejected the polite mode much more radically than Pope because he was much more deeply wedded than Pope to the interests of the minor landed gentry, which he felt the new compromises nominally incorporated but effectively penalised.

When Arnold complains of a lack of high seriousness in Pope he seems to mean the lack of a uniformly elevated tone, a tragic seriousness about man, and a gravity of poetic vision. Arnold misses what is truly present in Pope, but Pope's relationship with the polite helps us to see why Pope does not consistently show what Arnold seeks. As Aubrey Williams has shown, the Fourth book of the *Dunciad* does become genuinely epic in scope and seriousness,[18] presenting us with a tragic view of man. Satire as a genre tends to assume man's moral freedom, confronting him with clear-cut choices,[19] but in Book IV man is shown by the imagery as being in chains, in a vortex, enslaved, under a magic enchantment, under torture; man is more Dullness's victim than free agent. But Pope's seriousness is not necessarily solemn: the fourth book of the *Dunciad* is also, of course, wonderfully comic. The poetic sublime and the bursts of inspiration are checked by scepticism. The serious morality is expressed through wit. An aristocratic *sprezzatura* prevents Pope's morality from being expressed in a heavy way and becoming 'unpolite'. These are adjustments characteristic of the polite mode. A courtly wit makes Pope's mature poetry sprightly, injects it with a taint of the Restoration court wits' delight in shocking. A Christian sense that poetry is not of any final importance plays lightly about the lines and sometimes finds expression in them—'Heavens was I born for nothing but to write? / . . . Have I no friend to serve, no soul to save?' (*Epistle to Arbuthnot,* l. 272 and 274). In Epistle II of the *Essay on Man* Pope remarks how all men are happy in their delusions. In one of his recurrent stresses on poetry as delusion he identifies the poet with these amazing follies; but the lines have a strange energy and joy:

> See the blind rebel dance, the cripple sing,
> The sot a hero, lunatic a king,
> The starving chemist in his golden views
> Supremely blest, the poet in his muse.
>
> (*Essay on Man,* II, 267–270)

How ironic is that 'Supremely blest'? Here, and in a few other places, Pope's lightheartedness seems to come from a vicarious pleasure in the wild energies of folly and poetry that the defences of eighteenth century politeness were intended to restrain and that Pope himself condemned.

When the other poets of courtly wit decided to write in the 'sublime mode' they dropped their scepticism and their wit. Pope alone in this period can rise to universality and grandeur, with no loss of the intimate, the colloquial, the detailed and the comic. Prior, for example, can write marvellously light and sad poetry about transience, as in the last fifty lines of *Alma.* When he tries to write on the vanity of human wishes in *Solomon* the result is not convincing, for he forces himself to elevation and the sublime. Pope too can be sadly funny and Horatian on the topic, but he can also be convincing in a higher mode:

> Estates have wings, and hang in Fortune's pow'r
> Loose on the point of ev'ry wav'ring Hour;
> Ready by force, or of your own accord,
> By sale, at least by death, to change their Lord.
> Man? for ever? Wretch! what would'st thou
>   have?
> Heir urges Heir, like Wave impelling Wave:
> All vast possessions, (just the same the case)
> Whether you call them Villa, Park or Chace,
> Alas! my Bathurst, what will they avail?
> Join Cotswold Hills to Saperton's fair Dale
> Let rising Granaries and Temples here,
> There mingled Farms and Pyramids appear,
> Link Towns to Towns with Avenues of Oak,
> Enclose whole Downs in Walls, 'tis all a joke!
> Inexorable Death shall level all,
> And Trees and Stones, and Farms and Farmers fall.
> (*Imitations of Horace,* Epistle II, ii, 249–263)

The fourth book of the *Dunciad* is perhaps the best place for seeing Pope's final reconciliation of these conflicting impulses. Visionary, fictional, playful, it wanders in Fancy's maze, yet does not desert morality and truth. It shows a deep belief in poetry, for Pope's muse is Dullness's final opponent; yet it is sceptical too—for the muse will be overcome, and poets are Dullness's main allies. It is of epic and tragic seriousness, yet also light, witty, topical, and incorporating the gossipy ephemera of polite society. It displays the real Alexander Pope as mythological poet hero. It dismisses a polite civilisation in the polite poise of wit and in the most social of all metres. It shows Pope both using and transcending the themes and techniques of the polite mode.

University of Reading

NOTES

[1] *The Free Thinker,* No. 124, 1719.

[2] Essay on the Freedom of Wit', *Characteristics,* ed. John M. Robertson (London, 1900), I, 53 and 84.

[3] Defoe, *Pacificator,* cited Joseph Wood Krutch, *Comedy and Conscience after the Restoration,* (New York, 1924) p. 195. On the whole controversy see R. Kraft, 'Class Analysis of a Literary Controversy', *Science and Society,* X (1946), pp. 80–92.

[4] Cited by A. S. Collins, 'The Growth of the Reading Public during the Eighteenth Century', *Review of English Studies,* II, (1926), p. 431.

[5] 'The Progress of Beauty', *The Works of the English Poets,* ed. A. Chalmers (London, 1810), XI, 20.

[6] *Essay on Translated Verse,* ed. J. E. Spingarn, *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1908), II, 306.

[7] For this topic see David B. Morris, *The Religious Sublime,* (Kentucky, 1972), especially for comments on Dryden's attitudes pp. 41–42.

[8] Chalmers, XI, 27.

[9] Cf. (in connection with the sixteenth century poets) the article by J. W. Saunders, *E in C,* IX (1959), pp. 139–164.

[10] *Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford, 1965) I, p. 331.

[11] *A Rumor of Angels* (New York, 1969), p. 94.

[12] Chalmers, VIII, 407; 403.

[13] 'A Better Answer', l. 15, in *Matthew Prior, Literary Works,* ed. H. B. Wright and M. K. Spears (Oxford, 1959), I. 451.

[14] Joseph Spence, *Anecdotes,* ed. Samuel Singer (Illinois, 1964), p. 818.

[15] Spence, p. 169; *Correspondence* I, 109).

[16] 'A Discourse on Pastoral Poetry', *Literary Criticism of Alexander Pope,* ed. Betrand Goldgar (Nebraska, 1965), p. 95.

[17] These categories come especially from the *Institution of a Gentleman* (1555), cited by Humphrey Tonkin in *Spenser's Courteous Pastoral,* (Oxford, 1972), p. 160.

[18] *Pope's 'Dunciad': A Study of its Meaning* (Louisiana, 1955), pp. 131–158.

[19] The genre is discussed in these terms by Maynard Mack in 'The Muse of Satire', *Yale Review,* XLI (1951), pp. 80–92.

Clarissa and the Puritan Tradition

A. D. HARVEY

IT seems to be generally agreed that the moral code at the core of Richardson's *Clarissa* is Puritanism. Puritanism is constantly referred to in Ian Watt's well-known *The Rise of the Novel*; in *The English Novel: Form and Function,* Dorothy van Ghent describes the eponymous heroine of *Clarissa* as 'the love goddess of the Puritan middle class of the English eighteenth century', and sees 'the Puritan religious myth' as a major element in the narrative; and C. G. Wolff's monograph *Samuel Richardson and the Eighteenth-Century Puritan Character* argues very persuasively that the novel explores the three ego-ideals which 'dominated the Puritan's image of himself', that is, 'Puritan as Self-examiner, Puritan as Virtuous Example, and Puritan as Saint'.

The term Puritan is often used loosely, but in this context the references are presumably to the moral tradition of English Calvinism which flourished *circa* 1560–1660. Christopher Hill, the acknowledged doyen of Puritan studies, gave his support to this Richardson-as-Puritan approach in his essay 'Clarissa Harlowe and her Times', first published in *Essays in Criticism* and subsequently reprinted in his collection *Puritanism and Revolution.* Emphasising the extent to which the novel is about 'the economics of marriage' and represents 'the supreme criticism of property marriage', (*E in C,* V, p. 330) he not only attributed Clarissa's response to 'property marriage' to Puritan morality, but also implied that every aspect of Clarissa's behaviour was based on Puritanism. According to Christopher Hill, however, Richardson, by killing off Clarissa after her rape, reveals a crucial, though hitherto unsuspected contradiction in Puritan morality. Clarissa, not being an active party to her own rape, believes her honour intact. 'Clarissa's attitude is a logical application of the Protestant theory of justification by faith, with its emphasis on the inner intention of the believer rather than on his external actions' (p. 332). Why, then, does Clarissa pine away and die? If she is not guilty, why is she not able to carry on as before? Christopher Hill explains that she had to die because Richardson's respect for Clarissa's integrity 'led him to push the Puritan code forward to the point at which its flaw was completely revealed, at which it broke down as a standard of conduct for this world (p. 335) . . . she had no sense of guilt, her conscience was clear. But she knew what society's verdict would be. Its standards are those of the market: justification by faith was for Sundays only. Society judges by events, not by motives. Clarissa knew it, and it was this that made her death inevitable' (p. 332). It also argued that there was what would now be called a sexist element in Puritanism which influenced Richardson: 'the contradictions of subordination in equality which were inherent in the Puritan view of women were too strong for him' (p. 335). Women, being inferior to men, did not qualify for justification by faith in the way men did; they were bound by a social code from which the male true-believer was in effect exempt, a code which Christopher Hill describes as 'the dualism of bourgeois and Puritan modes of thought' (p. 336).

Yet though it is certainly true that 'property marriage' is a theme of the novel, it is not the only one. There is also, for example, the question of the subordination that children owed their parents and family elders, which is not merely a concomitant of property marriage, but rather the subject of an independent tradition derived from Biblical precept, and a matter to which all Puritan writers attached the utmost importance. But of course the major theme of the novel is sexual; and if we examine the precepts of sexual morality boldly and unambiguously laid down by numerous Puritan writers, we find ourselves in a very different moral world from that of *Clarissa*. *Clarissa* is about the seduction of a virgin, the forcible defloration of a pure maiden. Richardson plays on the reader's interest in whether Clarissa will or will not lose her virginity in a manner which can only be described as prurient. The villain, Lovelace, is portrayed as so clever, so artful, that it seems impossible that Clarissa can escape with her virtue: 'How unequal is a modest woman to the adventure, when she throws herself into the power of a Rake!'

Lovelace boasts (Vol. 3, letter xxxi).[1] And yet the reader is made to hang on to every thread of hope that the dread fate might be prevented. That it is a dread fate is suggested by the terms in which the rape is referred to, such as 'the worst I could do', 'the last extremity', 'the capital enormity', and by Belford's exclamation, 'what work hast thou made in *one guilty hour,* for a *whole age* of repentance!' (Vol. 4, letter xlix; vol. 6, letter xlvii; vol. 5, letter xxxiii). The view that loss of virginity was the ultimate catastrophe is also indicated by the fact that Clarissa, once having been raped, feels obliged to die. Yet there is not the same interest in Lovelace's virginity, which one presumes was lost long before: there is no thrill of horror at *his* being involved in sexual defilement. The whole interest of the narrative turns on the question of female virginity, and one female's virginity in particular.

The Puritans' numerous pronouncements on sexual matters put very little emphasis on female virginity. They attached a central importance to marriage, and all aspects of sexual behaviour were judged in terms of their relationship to marriage. Yet they did not approve of over-indulgence in the pleasures of the marriage-bed, for the same reasons as they did not approve of other forms of self-indulgence:

> To *overvalue* the Pleasing of the flesh is a sin: and to *prefer* it before the Pleasing of God, and the holy preparations for Heaven, is the state of carnality, and ungodliness, and the common cause of the Damnation of souls.
>
> *Flesh-pleasing* is the *Grand Idolatry* of the world: and the *Flesh* the *Greatest Idol* that was ever set up against God . . . how *impious* and *horrid* an *abasement* it is of the *external God,* to prefer so *vile a thing* before him . . . *whatever creature is loved ultimately for itself, and not for a higher end, even for God, his service, his honour, his relation to it, or his excellencie appearing in it, is sinfully loved.* For it is made our *God,* when it is *loved ultimately for itself.*[2]

Some Puritans felt an actual qualm at the idea of sexual pleasure being derived from marriage: thus J. Dod and

R. Cleaver in their influential *A Godlie Forme of Householde Government* wrote:

> 'Although marriage be a holy and sanctified ordinance, yet none may use the benefit of it, without some acknowledgement of originall sin, in that uncleannes may be practized therein, which should cause God's children to use this meanes with as much chastitie as may be'.[3]

Seventy years later, a Puritan preacher urged every woman

> to 'possess her vessel in sanctification', or sanctimony, 'and honour' (1 Thess. IV, 4), in a special kind of conjugal cleanness and chasteness, which is opposite to all turpitude, and 'lust of concupiscence' in the very appearance of it; that there may be, as much as possible, no show or tincture of uncleanness in the marriage-bed.[4]

Milton, whose career demonstrated that he was not altogether a typical puritan in his attitude to sex, showed the same uneasiness in *Paradise Lost* (Book VIII, 599ff.) where Adam, then still free of Original Sin, is warned by Raphael against sensual passion.

Fornication, of course, had all the disadvantages of marriage with regard to 'uncleanness', without any of the advantages; or, as Dod and Cleaver expressed it, 'if then in marriage it selfe there be such mischiefes, what hellish mischiefe is there in those lustes, which are not repressed with these considerations?'[5] Various other reasons against fornication were set out at length by another writer, John Downame, who pointed out that extra-marital sexual relations were contrary to 'God's expresse commandment', were 'an infallible signe and a plaine badge of such a man as God hateth', led to other sins such as adultery, murder, resisting the will of God, and 'subverting and destroying marriage', and were also a sin against 'their own children begotten in fornication', against society, and against oneself.[6] That fornication involved a threat to property, because it might mean that no man would know his own children 'which is worse than not to know their Lands or Houses',[7] was generally acknowledged by Puritan writers, but it was not the objection which they stressed.

Since all fornication was altogether wrong, the Puritans had no particular belief that the seduction of a virgin was particularly wrong: indeed, if they had been put to it, they might have acknowledged that the seduction of a virgin was less wrong than that worst of crimes, adultery, which involved the violation of marriage and of vows made before God. The Puritans had, moreover, no particular interest in virginity: it was for them merely a temporary state prior to one's entry into the proper adult state of matrimony. Any special exaltation of the state of virginity would have seemed to them reminiscent of Popish superstition. One preacher pointed out that vows of perpetual chastity were as sinful as contraception and abortion,[8] and claimed 'some of the Papists, in magnifying a single life, would appropriate chastity into virgins, (whom they themselves do debauch in their nunneries), yet we find from scripture and the ancient fathers, that there is chastity and continency in a marriage-state, as opposed to that in a single life'.[9]

Fornication, therefore, was regarded by the Puritans as equally wrong for both men and women. *Clarissa* embodies a quite different assumption about the moral equality of the sexes: it is in fact a classic of the Double Standard, the act which is the object of obsessed interest in the heroine's case being taken for granted in the villain's. The Puritans, however, would have been chiefly concerned by Lovelace's headlong pursuit of damnation, aggravated by his yet more criminal attempts to lead Clarissa herself into sin, and thereby 'to destroy an others soule too, and so to kill two at once'.[10]

That Richardson should have preoccupations to which the Puritans were strangers is hardly surprising considering the chronology of the matter. *Clarissa* was published in 1747–8. The hey-day of Puritanism had been as much as a century before. Of course, it had long retained adherents, especially amongst the middle classes to which Richardson belonged, and at the time he was writing Puritanism was actually experiencing a revival, in a somewhat altered form, under the influence of George Whitefield. Puritanism cannot therefore be said to have been extinct in 1747. Moreover, it can be argued that even those contemporaries of Richardson not consciously affected by the Puritan tradition nevertheless adhered to moral precepts and ethical preoccupations derived from it. C. G. Wolff is, consequently, probably quite right to assert Richardson's indebtedness to Puritan devotional literature with its tradition of identity crisis and obsession with minutiae.[11] But however much the moral code of an era seems to derive from earlier times, it invariably has perspectives and preoccupations of its own, which are peculiar to itself: even if it were the case that the morality of the 1740s was in direct genealogical descent from the morality of the 1640s, one would expect to find in it new emphases. There were, in fact, features in the sexual ethic of the 1740s which were totally alien to the 1640s; indeed, it is part of Richardson's cultural importance that he helped establish these features in the public consciousness.

There was, first of all, the doctrine that women derived no particular pleasure from sexual intercourse. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century it was generally believed that women derived more pleasure from sex than men. In London and amongst the scholars of Oxford in the mid-sixteenth century it was commonly said of women that, 'though they be the weaker vessels, yet they will overcome two, three or four men in the satisfying of their carnal appetites'.[12] In his essay 'On some verses of Virgil', Montaigne cited classical authorities on this point and recounted the story of the Catalan woman who complained 'of the too assiduous efforts of her husband' to the queen of Aragon who, after consultation with her council 'ordained as the legitimate and necessary limit the number of six a day, relinquishing and giving up much of the need and desire of her sex, in order, she said, to establish an easy and consequently permanent and immutable formula'. Montaigne indeed believed that continence had come to be regarded as particularly the duty of the female because of this greater appetite.[13] The warnings by Puritan divines against over-indulgence in marriage, quoted above, imply at least an equal appetite in wives as compared to husbands. Nicolas Venette's *Tableau de l'amour consideré dans l'estat du marriage* (Amsterdam, 1687) had a chapter discussing whether men or women were the more amorous, in which it was stated, 'Women are by far more lascivious and more amorous than Men'.[14] This standard text-book on sex also asserted that women 'are much more amorous than Men; and as Sparrows do not live long, because they are too hot, and too susceptible of Love, so Women last less time; because they have a devouring heat, that consumes them by degrees'.[15] But during the early eighteenth century, general beliefs on this score changed. The reasons for this are obscure. Obviously it was connected as cause as well as effect with the increasing romanticization of sexual passion. The change must have been connected, too, with the increased emphasis on the idea (by no means new) that a man had a property in his wife's sexual services;[16] if the sexual role of men was to possess, and that of women was to *be* possessed, then obviously men, as possessors, could have free and active independent appetites which women, as possessed, could not. Perhaps male fears and resentment at the greater sexual appetite of women, which constituted a particularly subversive challenge to male prepotency in other areas, led to men's denying the very existence of these appetites. At any rate, the Victorian notion of female sexual passivity was already becoming established in Richardson's day. Of course the old view lingered on. In the novels of both Fielding and Smollett there are many female characters whose sexual appetites are evidently quite as strong as those of the male ones. Significantly enough, in Fielding this tends to be implied in the case of the women, but more explicitly stated in the case of the men; in Smollett, female lust is customarily disguised by protestations of virtue and purity. Richardson, on the other hand, seems to have had no doubt that women were naturally the destined victims of male sexual aggression.

This identification of the woman as sexual victim led to a preoccupation with the moment of her formal sacrifice: the loss of her virginity. Though it was realised that there was no certain physical evidence of virginity in the case of every young woman,[17] very often, when they spoke of preserving their virtue intact, they seemed to regard 'virtue' and the hymeneal membrane as synonymous. Both in *Clarissa* and in Richardson's earlier *Pamela,* the sexual relationship of the principal characters, at first subtle and ambivalent, becomes progressively simpler and starker, till it is reduced to a kind of obsessive ballet in which one character constantly tries to snatch, and the other as constantly tries to preserve, the particular virginity which is the central protagonist of the book. In *Clarissa,* Lovelace actually boasts of his preoccupation with virginity, remarking of one of his earlier and less significant paramours, 'is it not very impudent of her to think, that I will be any man's *successor*? . . . I have been always aiming at the merit of a first discoverer' (vol. 4, letter xliii). But the obsession shared by Lovelace and his creator was merely a particularly striking instance of an attitude that was increasingly widely shared.

What happened may be described as a reification of sex insofar as it involved women: what previously had been acknowledged as a normal human function (in both men and women) was put on a special plane as far as women were concerned, and buttressed about with mystery and taboo. It was a kind of sensationalisation of sex, involving the injection into sexuality of characteristics and a degree of interest that had not been thought relevant in earlier ages. There was also a kind of limitation of sex: the whole physical equipment of female sexuality was reduced to one totem, and that an entity of problematical physical existence, the maidenhead; the complexities of female sexual chemistry were reduced to one preliminary act, defloration. Characteristic of this new attitude was the practice of referring to female virginity in terms more applicable to a physical, conveyable object: it was as if each woman's virginity took on form and substance, detached itself from the woman, and became a disposable commodity. Moll Flander's remark that 'being forsaken of my Vertue, and my Modesty, I had nothing of Value left to recommend me, either to God's Blessing or Man's Assistance',[18] is still on the borderline between metaphor and literal statement, but expressions like 'if she has cracked her Pitcher a little too soon, it will soon mend again . . . she may bring her Goods to Market a year or two hence, if she stays so long, as sound as a Roach', and 'you must some time or other, bring the Toy to Market', which appear in the anonymous *The History of the Human Heart*[19] show unambiguously the depersonalisation of female sexuality. The word *commodity* actually became current slang for the female genitals, and though it does not seem to have beeen used with any special reference to either virgins or non-virgins, the comparable term 'money' seems only to have been used in relation to girls too young ever to have had sexual intercourse, as in the phrase, 'take care miss, or you will shew your money'.[20] This notion of virginity as a conveyable article of value is evident in *Pamela*, when the heroine writes, 'to lose the best Jewel, my Virtue, would be poorly recompensed by those you propose to give me'.[21] The metaphorical description of the heroine's virginity as a treasure became a commonplace of the period (thus *The Finish'd Rake* has 'commit this Amorous Theft, and rifle all her Virgin Charms').[22] Also popular was the simile of a flower or blossom (for example 'my virgin flower was yet uncropp'd' in *Fanny Hill*[23]) and sometimes these two images were used together, as when the hero of *The Adventures of a Rake* 'robbed her of her Virgin Treasure, and cropped that Rose which would not bloom again'.[24] The metaphor of a mine which was also employed, though more anatomically suggestive, still conveyed the idea of removable goods: 'he was a Novice in the art of working the Maidenhead Mines', wrote the author of *The History of the Human Heart*,[25] and John Cleland alluded even more graphically to 'that darling treasure, that hidden mine, so eagerly sought after by men, and which they never dig for but to destroy'.[26] Sometimes images are used that are so vague that it is not evident what they are, only that they are not human: the passage in one of Eliza Haywood's short stories in which an over-eager lover 'ravag'd each sweet charm about her, and left her only the Ruins of a Virgin',[27] seems to represent the heroine as some kind of building, though the language conveys more of the idea of a serious maiming than of an erotic encounter: at any rate, the human reality is concealed in depersonalising jargon.

The feature of *Clarissa* that places the novel at the heart of the new morality is the death of Clarissa herself. Having been raped, she was indeed 'flawed goods', as Christopher

Hill says (*E in C*, V, p. 332) but not so much in terms of the property market as in terms of the virginity market. As a deeply wronged woman and an heiress, she might have been regarded as still deserving the attention of possible suitors, but she had lost the one thing that was the object of the obsessed interest of her generation. Amongst the scribbles she makes after her rape, Paper VII refers to 'the fair leaf of Virgin Fame', 'the early promises of the shining year', 'the fairest garment', 'the opening Bud', 'the damask Rose'. These are not symbolic statements of her view of sex as ideally a matter of growth, fertility, harvest, warmth, and richness, as compared to Lovelace's view of sex as ego-endorsement, as Mark Kinkead-Weekes suggests.[23] They are *cliché* metaphors, indicative of the reification of sex of which she and through her, Richardson, are exponents, and similar to the imagery quoted above. In the same idiom is the 'white lily snapt short off, and just falling from the stalk' which is later amongst the devices on the lid of her coffin. (vol. 7, letter lxxxii) Her virtue has been reduced by her moral code to a physical commodity, and Lovelace has fatally damaged it. When Lovelace points out that she has suffered only 'a mere notional violation' (vol. 5, letter xliii) and that 'Miss Clarissa Harlowe, if it be not her own fault, may be as virtuous *after* she has lost her honour, as it is called, as she was *before*' (vol. 5, xxviii) modern readers might well agree, but the fact that these arguments come from the villainous Lovelace's pen indicates that Richardson believed otherwise. Virtue is not a state of mind, for all that the Lady in Milton's *Comus* thought so a century earlier: it is a thing which can be lost whatever the owner's state of mind at the time of losing. Clarissa admits that her rape 'has not tainted my mind, it has not hurt my morals' (vol. 7, letter lix), but she has to tell Lovelace that she would have married him before the rape, when it 'would have been a principal inducement, that I could then have brought thee, what was *most* wanted, an unsullied honour in dowry, to a wretch destitute of all honour; and could have met the gratulation of a family, to which thy life has been one continued disgrace, with a consciousness of *deserving* their gratulations. But thinkest then that I will give a Harlotniece to thy honourable Uncle . . . ?' (vol. 5, letter xli)

With her honour lost, all was lost. Certainly she could not marry any other man: as she tells Lovelace 'my Uncle Harlowe when he knows how I am, will never wish any man to have me' (vol. 5, letter xxxvi). In fact, the significance attached to virginity had the effect on conferring a special status, in the case of each woman, on the man who deflowered her. In another novel of the period, by Penelope Aubin, Violetta tells a priest how she became a slave and lost her virginity in the harem of Osmin the Turk: 'I submitted to the fatal necessity of my Circumstances . . . I even loved him, saw him with a Wife's Eyes, and thought myself oblig'd to do so'. The priest replies 'as you were single, a Virgin and made his by the Chance of War, it was no Sin in you to yield to him . . . nay, a Sin not to have been faithful to his Bed, whilst he is living you ought not to marry'.[29] Later in the century an eccentric Calvinist divine subsequently forced into a premature retirement by the peculiarity of his views, argued that

> *marriage,* as instituted of GOD, simply consists (as to the essence of it) in the *union* of the *man* and *woman* as *one body*; for which plain and evident reason, no outward forms or ceremonies of man's invention, can add to or diminish from the effects of *this union* in the sight of GOD. What ends these things may serve, as to civil purposes, I shall not dispute: but I cannot suppose that the *matrimonial*-service in our church, or any other, can make the parties more *one flesh* in the sight of GOD, supposing them to have been *united,* than the *burial*-service can make a corpse over which it is red more dead than it was before.[30]

To what extent Richardson actually subscribed, or his heroine may have been supposed to subscribe to such views, need not be debated, though Lovelace certainly believed he had a right to regard Clarissa as his wife, once he had possessed her: 'there is now but one man in the world whom she can have—', he writes, 'And that is *Me.*' (vol. 5, letter xliii) At any rate, Clarissa minus her virginity no longer has anything to offer a husband. After her rape she tells Lovelace, 'all my prospects are shut in—

I give myself up for a lost creature as to this world'. (Vol. 5, letter xxxviii) Later she acknowledges, 'My refuge must be death'. (vol. 6, letter lxxxi) Her predicament may be compared to that of Antonia in Lewis's *The Monk*, a classic of the gothic genre which Richardson partly influenced; having been raped and fatally wounded by Ambrosio, Antonia tells her true-love, Lorenzo, with her dying breath, 'had She still been undefiled, She might have lamented the loss of life; But that deprived of honour and branded with shame, Death was to her a blessing: She could not have been his Wife, and that hope being denied her, She resigned herself to the Grave without one sigh of regret'.[31] As a female character in Robert Bage's novel *Mount Henneth* says of loss of virtue, 'all crimes but this may be expiated: no author has yet been so bold as to permit a lady to live and marry, and be a woman after this stain'.[32]

Unable, therefore, to marry, Clarissa was faced by two alternatives: either perpetual celibacy (and for this she was already disqualified since in the eighteenth century the only mitigation for the disgrace of living to be an old maid was the ability to boast of an intact virtue[33]) or death. As she writes after her rape, in Paper X,

> When Honour's lost 'tis a relief to die:
> Death's but a sure retreat from infamy.

Not that death was merely a negative refuge: the voluptuously sexual aspect of Clarissa's preparations for her own demise (and more especially for her burial) have been pointed out by Ian Watt.[34] Throughout the novel the sexual threat and the threat to life have been confused and blended. For example, quite early in the novel, Clarissa dreams that Lovelace blames her for joining in a plot against him, and 'seizing upon me, carried me into a church-yard; stabbed me to the heart, and then tumbled me into a deep grave, ready dug, among two or three half-dissolved carcases' (vol. 2, letter xxxix), and later she asks Lovelace to put her out of her misery and suspense by stabbing ('Here, here . . . let thy pointed mercy enter!') (vol. 5, letter xlii). Thus, her death is partly the ultimate indulgence of eighteenth-century sexual fantasies, and partly the result of the contradictions implicit in the eighteenth century's reification of female sexuality; either way it has very little to do with Puritanism.

Wolfson College
Cambridge

NOTES

[1] References to the third edition of *Clarissa* (1751), 8 vols., 12°.

[2] R. Baxter, *A Christian Directory* (1673). Mm. 3, Mm. 4v., Uu. 2.

[3] J. Dod and R. Cleaver, *A Godlie Forme of Householde Government* (1612), K6.

[4] J. Nicholls ed. *The Morning Excercises at Cripplegate, St. Giles in the Fields, And In Southwark,* 5th ed. 6 vols. (1844), vol. 3, p. 553; Richard Adam's sermon 'How May Child-Bearing Women Be Most Encouraged and Supported Against, In, and Under the Hazard of Their Travail?'.

[5] Dod and Cleaver, *op. cit.,* K6.

[6] J. Downame, *Four Treatises, Tending to Disswade All Christians from four no lesse hainous than common sinnes; namely the abuses of Swearing, Drunkennesse, Whoredome, and Briberie* (1614), p. 136, foll.

[7] Baxter, *op. cit.,* Eee 3.

[8] Nicholls, *The Morning Excercises,* etc., vol. 3, pp. 543–4. Richard Adam's sermon.

[9] *Ibid.,* p. 555.

[10] J. Dod and R. Cleaver, *A Plaine and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments* (1604), Z7.

[11] C. G. Wolff, *Samuel Richardson And The Eighteenth Century Puritan Character* (Hamden Connecticut, 1972), p. 20, p. 55.

[12] J. H. Osborn ed., *The Autobiography of Thomas Whythorne* (1962), p. 15.

[13] D. M. Frame, trans., *The Complete Works of Montaigne* (1957), p. 650.

[14] Cf. Nicolas Venette, *Tableau de l'amour consideré dans l'estat du mariage.* Parma (1688), p. 158; the quotation is from p. 161 of the English translation published under the title *Conjugal Love Reveal'd* (1720).

[15] Cf. Venette, *Tableau de l'amour* (1688 ed.), p. 106; the quotation is from p. 110 of the 1720 English translation.

[16] K. V. Thomas, 'The Double Standard', *Journal of the History of Ideas,* vol. XX (1959), pp. 195–216, pp. 209–16.

[17] Venette, *Tableau de l'amour,* livre 2, ch. 1, or Chap. IV of 1720 English translation.

[18] D. Defoe, *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders,* O.U.P. ed. (1971), p. 29 (first published 1722).

[19] *The History of The Human Heart* (1885 ed.), pp. 47–8, p. 110 (first published 1749).

[20] Cf. Francis Grose, *A Classical Dictionary of The Vulgar Tongue* (1785).

[21] *Pamela,* Journal, 37th Day of Imprisonment, answers to B.'s proposals, article 5.

[22] *The Finish'd Rake* (1733) p. 41.

[23] J. Cleland, *Fanny Hill* (1963 ed.), p. 56 (first published 1748–9 as *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*).

[24] [R. Lewis], *The Adventures of a Rake,* 2 vols. (1759), vol. 1, p. 91.

[25] *The History of the Human Heart,* p. 38.

[26] *Fanny Hill,* p. 55.

[27] Eliza Haywood, *Cleomelia, Or, The Generous Mistress* (1727), p. 89. ('The Lucky Rape'.)

[28] *Samuel Richardson Dramatic Novelist* (1973), p. 238.

[29] Penelope Aubin, *The Strange Adventures of The Count de Vinevil and his Family* (1721), pp. 91--2.

[30] [M. Madan], *Thelyphthora: Or, A Treatise on Female Ruin,* 2 vols. (1780), vol. 1, p. 21–2, Madan was, incidentally, the first cousin of the poet Cowper. A rather late instance of this same view is in Hardy's *Tess of The D'Urbervilles* in which both Angel Clare and Alec D'Urberville believe that Alec having been '*as one body*' with Tess gives him the right to regard himself as her real husband.

[31] M. G. Lewis, *The Monk*, O.U.P. ed. (1973), p. 392.

[32] R. Bage, *Mount Henneth* (1781), quoted from 2nd ed. (1788), vol. 1, p. 221.

[33] Cf. I. Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (1957), p. 144; R. P. Utter and G. B. Needham, *Pamela's Daughters* (1937), pp. 214–235.

[34] *The Rise of the Novel,* p. 234.

Book Reviews

ONE MAN IN HIS TIME

'Don Juan' in Context. By JEROME J. MCGANN. John Murray, 1976; £5.50.

Professor Jerome McGann, a concise writer, has taken only 168 pages to achieve two books in one. The more successful of the two is a book of straight literary criticism on the form and style of *Don Juan*, though it is grounded in observation of the poet's character. Because Byron was constitutionally wayward and unwilling to commit himself, *Don Juan* was never planned as a long poem: as an epic it is, to use a favourite word, 'fortuitous'. While McGann is studying the poem in the light of this idea, he is excellent. He writes elegantly and precisely. His chapter on 'Style' is as good an exposition as one could hope to meet of Byron's manner and tone. The passage in which he analyzes stanza 111 of Canto 1 illustrates what he can do in this vein:

> The hand which still held Juan's, by degrees
> Gently, but palpably confirm'd its grasp,
> As if it said, 'Detain me, if you please';
> Yet there's no doubt she only meant to clasp
> His fingers with a pure Platonic squeeze:
> She would have shrunk as from a toad, or asp
> Had she imagined such a thing could rouse
> A feeling dangerous to a prudent spouse. . . .

Here we have, like the lovers, two pleasures for our choosing. For while Juan and Julia are in the process of experiencing first and passionate love, definitely a gain, a 'winning' pleasure (in both senses), they are also in process of experiencing a 'fall' from innocence which, in *Don Juan*'s terms, is a definite loss, though not only a loss. Julia's innocent self-deception in stanza 111 locates her in the act of 'falling' from innocence. . . . The equivocal effect is not simply in the clash of gains and losses but in the clash of the *pleasures* of gains and losses. That is to say, the gaining (first love) and the losing (innocence) are each in themselves equivocal experiences. . . .

> The clash of loss and gain . . . produces its own sort of benevolence, and so one says, . . . proverbially and quite truly: 'All losses are perpetual gains', or, in Baudelaire's wonderful witticism, 'All is for the best in this worst of all possible worlds'. In the end, Julia and Juan's 'sixth of June' is a very funny, amusing, touching, and even sad day, and we are meant to feel all these things. (p. 84)

McGann's responsiveness to Byron's style, and his sympathy for Byron's personality, stand him in relatively good stead throughout the latter half of his book—though the critical line he takes shows best on 'Style', and marginally less well when he comes to deal with 'Form' and 'Content'. But analysis of *Don Juan* as a poem is the concern only of the book's second half, while the first half proposes a subject which is—or might have been—distinctly different. The interest there, and to all intents and purposes the book McGann set out to write, is signalled by his title, *'Don Juan' in Context*. This book is an attempt to tackle the perennial puzzle confronting Byron's readers and critics: the apparent division of his career into two halves. Byron made his fashionable name with narrative poems which deployed romantic heroes against exotic settings—the first two Cantos of *Childe Harold, The Giaour, The Corsair*, and so forth—and between 1816 and 1818 he more than maintained his reputation for extravagant gloom with the continuation of *Childe Harold*, and with *Manfred*. Why did he then turn, with *Beppo* and *Don Juan*, to a comic manner and an intermittently more bourgeois backdrop—both seemingly a world away from the intensity, or theatrical posturing, of 'Byronics'?

The answer, McGann thinks, lies within Byron's nature. The places to look are Byron's own productions—the poems, the letters, and some of the actions. Over more than a decade of Byron self-commentary, McGann finds evidence of the personal traits that eventually found apt expression in *Don Juan*: high personal ambition, coupled with wilfulness and infirmity of purpose. Byron wanted to be a great man, but in England few opportunities offered, and on the Continent the fall of Napoleon set a depressing example. Gradually, in the middle stages of his career, between 1816 and 1819, McGann sees him more and more inclined to identify himself imaginatively with poets: Rousseau, Tasso, Dante, above all, as a literary mentor, Milton. Though he made no conscious decision to write a long poem when he began *Don Juan* in 1818, his inner drives would be satisfied only by the large statement. His own nature impelled him towards epic.

Like the whole of McGann's book, this essay in literary biography is neatly and (within its self-imposed limits) convincingly done. But as an exercise in setting a work in context, it has grave faults, which raise issues of a general methodological kind. A poem, like an event, has a history. Its history is at once personal and impersonal, particular and general. No historian would confine his explanation of a significant event to the conscious will, or unconscious drives, of the single actor who performed it. It would be naive indeed to 'explain' the discovery of America through the strengths and weaknesses of Columbus's personality, without reference to the factors that impelled the nations of Europe's Atlantic seaboard to find an outlet to the west. One would not wish to undervalue McGann's often plausible analysis of Byron's personality. Still less would one willingly forego such splendidly detailed biographies of the individual Romantic poets as Leslie Marchand's of Byron, or Mary Moorman's of Wordsworth—even though in practice these encourage, and perpetrate, the same narrow exclusivity.

Literary historians are as subject as any other historians to certain rules of procedure. They ought not to be found explaining a phenomenon which can be widely observed at a particular period—and thus appears symptomatic—through an approach, however subtle and well-documented, to the mind of a single individual. Some writers—notably Byron and Keats—provide in their letters such excellent material for the critic-biographer, or even the critic-analyst, that it is especially tempting to see their development as they saw it themselves. In 1817 Byron felt dissatisfied with his present style (quite why, McGann does not explain). Two friends, Kinnaird and Rose, happened to visit him in Venice, and to show him J. H. Frere's poem *Whistlecraft*, which borrowed the *ottava rima* and the slapdash comic manner of the fifteenth-century Florentine, Pulci. Byron afterwards declared that *Whistlecraft* was the most 'immediate model' of his own new comic manner. No doubt, like the rest of us, he was more aware of the sudden idea, leading to action, than of any slow-growing roots in the culture of his day. But then no man is the best commentator on the sources of his own ideas. If he is Byron, bent on leadership, he may be constitutionally incapable of grasping that he has followed in the wake of other writers; still less, that he is part of a movement. We are not bound to see it his way.

In fact, the task of setting his poem in its context should have involved taking all evidence from Byron himself with a strong pinch of salt. McGann ought to have considered whether there were not forces external to Byron which—whether he knew it or not—prompted him to write a poem that was long rather than short, comic rather than solemn, extrovert rather than introvert, Mediterranean rather than Gothic. Pressures of this kind might be set up, for example, with the publication in 1814 of a poem McGann does not mention by name: Wordsworth's *Excursion*. It is all very well to harp on the topic of Byron's debt to Milton. An English poet who aspires (however nonchalantly) to write an epic must relate himself in one way or another to the author of *Paradise Lost*. But Wordsworth in 1814 not only published a poem in nine books: he announced that he had another extended work finished and hidden away—what was later to be called the *Prelude*—and, moreover, that everything he had so far published could be 'likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses' of a great Gothic church.

The relationship between Byron and Wordsworth has to be considered not only as a highbrow literary matter, in which the critic is justified in using terms like allusion and influence, anxious or otherwise. It also existed on the vulgar level of personal rivalry. Byron in 1814 was the darling of the drawing-rooms, and a poet-bestseller who had eclipsed even Scott. But these two roles were potentially in conflict, for a gentleman does not publish for profit. Any upper-class writer of the period resented being called 'author' to his face, because the occupation was socially degrading. Byron, who as McGann rightly says insisted on pre-eminence, was in the awkward position of having to eclipse Wordsworth, without being seen to compete with him at all. McGann quotes the revealing outburst to Moore in 1818, against the terms in which Leigh Hunt had recently praised Wordsworth:

> Did you read his skimble-skamble about Wordsworth being at the head of his own *profession*, in the *eyes* of *those* who followed it? I thought that poetry was an *art*, or an *attribute,* and not a *profession*;—but be it one, is that ***** at the head of *your* profession in *your* eyes? I'll be cursed if he is of *mine,* or ever shall be. He is the only one of us (but of us he is not) whose coronation I would oppose. Let them take Scott, Campbell, Crabbe, or you, or me, or any of the living, and throne him;—but not this new Jacob Behmen, this ***** whose pride might have kept him true, even had his principles turned as perverted as his *soi-disant* poetry. (p. 57)

The middle-class Hunt, who made his living openly by writing, had used the word 'profession' in all innocence, but Byron writhed at the very idea of being recruited to the professional class. McGann's explanation seems curiously oblivious of the sense of caste—'the idea that Wordsworth was at the "head" of the "profession", or indeed that anyone should even think of poetry in such an imperial fashion, became Byron's call to arms'. It is much more serious that he misses the whole significance of the new situation created for Byron in 1814. For *Don Juan* must in a real sense be Byron's counter-*Excursion*: comic where Wordsworth is solemn, sceptical where Wordsworth is Christian, liberal where Wordsworth is conservative, extrovert and panoramic where Wordsworth locates a succession of personal histories in one retired spot. As well as making the culmination of Wordsworth's own career, the *Excursion* celebrates the victory of England, a Christian and traditionalist society, over France and innovation. Byron's answer, appropriately ribald and anarchic, is *his* commentary on the restored monarchies, the Holy Alliance, and narrow, canting England. McGann cites Byron's growing confidence that he is writing a great poem, and such a poem as the world will not willingly let die, as further evidence of his debt to Milton. It is that, of course; but Wordsworth's prefatory verses to the *Excursion* invoke the memory of Milton too. Byron threw down the gauntlet to Wordsworth, challenging him to the contest as the great poet of the age, and Milton's heir. The tone, the manner, the response to external events: would any leading characteristics of *Don Juan* be as they are if Wordsworth's *Excursion* had not existed first?

Yet everything Byron says himself about *Don Juan* suggests that he took it up in 1818 by chance and continued it from whim. He could hardly admit what is nevertheless surely the truth, that he was retaliating against Wordsworth—and doing it so late that he was in mortal danger of being seen to trail behind a mob of others. Byron had been a genuine leader of literary fashion in 1812, when he published the first two Cantos of *Childe Harold*. He had stumbled simultaneously on two winning formulae—the moody outcast of a hero, and the panoramic form, which enabled him to comment, from the liberal point of view, on contemporary real-life struggles for national independence. The *Childe Harold* persona made him fashionable; but it was the liberalism that attracted clever young intellectuals, like Shelley and Peacock. In turn these two embarked upon epics, in Spenserian stanzas, which represented from the progressive viewpoint the present post-revolutionary situation. For others, meanwhile, *Childe Harold* paved the way for that sharp ideological identification—so typical in England for the next decade—between the culture of the Mediterranean region and political liberalism. But Byron himself spent the next few years failing to follow up his own lead. While he remained fashionable and London-based, he indulged himself more and more with splendid self-advertisement, in a series of poems that had less and less to do with affairs of state. It was only when he went into exile, and experienced pressure from Shelley and from his Italian liberal friends, that he once again assumed the mantle of the liberal poet. The change in his style after he arrived in Italy may represent, as McGann seems to think, the resolution of tensions that were already in him. Yet it is surely also true that after

1816 he could no longer achieve the pre-eminence he craved for, except as the leader of radical intellectuals—of other effective outcasts, like himself.

His freedom of action was by now severely limited, circumscribed by intellectual cross-currents over which no individual had control. In an era of political upheaval, six years is a long time, and for Byron, in 1818, simply to return to his manner of 1812 would hardly do. Since then, in England especially, the case for the South of Europe had been enormously elaborated. In 1813 J. L. Sismondi's *History of the Italian Republics* appeared in an English translation. It represented late medieval Florence as the Athens of modern times: another heroic republic, which created the conditions for intellect and art to flourish, and so gave birth to writers like Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. Within five years, Hunt published his *Story of Rimini*; Keats followed with *Isabella*, and a plan to join with Reynolds in a volume of verse tales from Boccaccio; Peacock's *Melincourt* alludes continually to Tasso. There was also the harmless *jeu d'esprit* from a lesser man than any of these—Frere's *Whistlecraft*. Liberal enthusiasm for Renaissance Italy was meanwhile further whipped up by the new right-wing vogue for medieval Germany. French imperialism on the Continent had created a backlash against France, modernity, and the whole Enlightenment habit of thought, including political liberalism. It was the intellectual fashion in Germany and Bourbon France, for the time being, to be ultra-Catholic and conservative; if not actively religious, at least inward, and intense.

But in England a Tory government had been in power almost throughout the war years, with the result that in 1815 the youthful English intelligentsia tended to be liberal. It is one of the most important facts of our intellectual history, for it helps to explain why Germanic 'High Romanticism' gained no real foothold in England until the age of Carlyle. This fact is also, surely, the key to Byron's extreme dissatisfaction with himself in 1817, and his almost comic predicament. For the would-be liberal poet was now caught out, by movements of ideas which the unanalytic Byron could, all too evidently, never quite come to grips with. He did grasp that, though he had begun as a recognized liberal, his name was now associated with a kind of style—emotional, gloomy, withdrawn and subjective—that all over Europe was thought of as conservative. To be 'romantic' was to be anti-classical, which in turn was to be anti-Enlightenment and anti-Athenian. Byron accordingly seemed to rediscover classicism, and neo-classicism, around 1817.

His own word for the 'Romantic' style he thus became disenchanted with was 'mannerist'. McGann is fond of the word and uses it frequently, without offering to explain what it means. In general terms, clearly, it implies excessive addiction to a certain literary usage, or fashion. More specifically, it would seem in this period to have been employed of partisan writing, and of Byron himself when he used his 'Romantic' style. At least, it is hard to imagine who else Shelley had in mind (unless it was Wordsworth) when he exclaimed to Keats (27 July 1820), 'in poetry *I* have sought to avoid system and mannerism; I wish those who excel me in genius, would pursue the same plan'. The only way Byron could stop everyone from identifying him with the wrong manner was to adopt the right one with equivalent panache. He claimed back his old prestige among liberals, with a poem that flamboyantly asserted itself everything that Wordsworth, and the introverted North, were not. *Don Juan* goes back to the model of the first *Childe Harold*, but only up to a point. It uses the panoramic and satirical backdrop. The action begins in Spain, and moves eastward towards Greece. But of the 'romantic' hero, and attendant opportunities for self-indulgent reverie, there is no sign. As a tactic, it is eminently characteristic. The very pose of carelessness, eccentricity—even, perhaps, fortuitousness—is typical of Byron's complex relationship with the world: he would hate to be found explicable. The poem which results subscribes to a different concept of art from Wordsworth's, and proclaims itself less extreme than the 'mannerist' style of the other party. But, because it is Byron writing, it is still a showman's effort—'Lord Byron's last flash poem', as Keats called it, enviously, and truly.

One can hardly ignore the presence of the man behind *Don Juan*. And yet the man's effort is something of a smokescreen, a claim to intellectual leadership and to originality that will not necessarily stand investigation. McGann takes up the point made earlier by T. G. Steffan, that *Don Juan* was at first unpopular, and thus masks the fact that among liberals, intellectuals, other writers, it was not unpopular at all. It was imitated; it was even imitated by Shelley, as early as 1820. This was because Byron was doing with magnificent bravura what others were already doing more self-effacingly. One of the most distinctive features of *Don Juan* is the length its author goes, to hide the fact that it is a poem of its period.

'No man', said Peacock, as he reviewed some *Lives of Shelley*, 'is bound to write the life of another'. No man is obliged to write a book putting *Don Juan* in its context. Some day no doubt somebody will do it. Meanwhile, let us be grateful for one of the best studies extant of the poem as Byron saw it and wanted us to see it—the poem he felt he initiated—the poem in isolation.

St. Hugh's College
Oxford
MARILYN BUTLER

DECENT THINGS

Thackeray: Prodigal Genius. By JOHN CAREY. Faber and Faber, 1977; £6.95.

Professor Carey's *Thackeray: Prodigal Genius* is, like his book on Dickens, *The Violent Effigy*, an entertaining book. He stands up well to his subjects in sharp wit and irony, but in doing so he takes something away from them too. Extreme selectivity, as he says, is the basis of any ironic style. What he sets out to catch and assemble critically are the 'thousand brilliant spurts' by which Geoffrey Tillotson characterized Thackeray's work and which Carey, like Orwell, considers to come most thick and fast in the early satirical articles and other literary journalism; in most things up to and including *Vanity Fair* but not in a way much worth speaking of in *Pendennis*, *The Newcomes*, *Henry Esmond*, *The Virginians* or *Philip*, though he detects a belated spurt in *Lovel the Widower*: 'any account of Thackeray which confines itself to the "major novels" immeasurably diminishes him'. There's a real service done here: Professor Carey makes you eager to read the works he admires. A greater service would have been done by editing and introducing a manageable selection of the best of these shorter pieces.

Carey has a keenly noticing eye for Thackeray's fireworks; as in the Dickens book much of the entertainment comes from the picking of quotations. What he admires is Thackeray's own noticing way and his 'sharp' stance: the 'frisky' feel of quick sketches, his 'trying to snatch the quick bright things from life as the great painters had', an art like that he found in ballet, 'lit, quick, never precisely repeatable'; 'grabbing exactly the image (quick and unexpected enough for an Imagist poem) that will bring the frothing spectacle before us'. Carey is as greedy for images as he makes Thackeray seem; he wants more and more. 'So quick bright things come to confusion'—especially in a book using such widespread material without footnotes, and sometimes giving no dates or names of recipients for letters briefly quoted.

Carey several times compares Thackeray with T. S. Eliot, for his 'evocative fragments that sometimes combine into bigger wholes, sometimes not', but he is unilluminating about what sort of bigger wholes Thackeray makes. In this he suffers by comparison with Barbara Hardy's *The Exposure of Luxury*, with her sense of the full range and depth of Thackeray's implicit analysis of society, of its perversion, crippling and killing of the capacity for love. Professor Hardy sometimes makes Thackeray sound rather like George Eliot—Carey's account of his aesthetics, emerging cunningly in the chapters on 'Food and Drink' and 'Theatre', provides a corrective to this—but she does take on the long novels as extensive narrative structures, using juxtapositions of incident and character, and studies Thackeray's characteristic expressive use of reversals in relationships. This technique is finely miniaturized in 'A Little Dinner at Timmins's' to give dynamic and comic narrative substance to the explicit attack on snobbery: in submission to his wife Timmins gives a dinner he can't afford to more people than he can house, thereby exposing himself to the power of his mother-in-law, Mrs. Gashleigh, 'to shake off which had been the object of his life'; her power is in turn vanquished by the hired butler, Truncheon. This exertion and displacement of power makes a pattern throughout the story's comic devices, from the claims and rejections of the guest list—*which* fat people can or can't be got in—to the apotheosis and degradation of Fubsby's girls. It's a very satisfying pattern, justifying Orwell's claim for it as 'one of the best comic short stories ever written'. But in Carey's accounts, in three separate places, it falls apart, like almost everything else, into sharp little fragments.

From her study of structure Professor Hardy draws out what she sees as major themes marking a radical criticism of society, boldly taking love as Thackeray's and her own standard of judgement. Carey is simply not prepared to take on the novels as narrative wholes, though there is—there has to be—a good chapter on *Vanity Fair*, centring on characterization and the 'massive apparatus of authentication'. He interestingly compares Thackeray's handling of war with Tolstoy's, communicating respect for Thackeray's reticence—'Taking trips into glory via one's reading-matter was, he considered, puerile and self-deluding'—and tracing well if briefly how Thackeray uses a series of incidents 'like drumbeats, muffled at first but growing louder. . . to record war's incursion into the lives of a peaceful family' bringing 'battle to the dining-room door'. He ends this chapter with a massed peroration of characters, facts, and commodities that convincingly enacts his bewitchment with Thackeray's book, 'as capacious as life itself'.

But how does Carey see Thackeray seeing this life—what are his standards of judgement? It's not easy to see or say because here again he catches like an infection the quality he most admires in his subject, irony. Thackeray 'is among the greatest of English ironists'—and, incidentally, a comparison with Swift, whom Thackeray called 'an awful, evil spirit', would be useful in establishing the respective values implied by their satire. This is one of several claims for Thackeray's greatness that Carey makes, and the others are questionable in value if not in truth—deliberately questionable and disconcerting, for if Thackeray 'enjoyed giving [cool reason] its say, especially when he knew it would rile people', so does Carey, though it's doubtful how reasonable his cool is: 'Nothing meant more to Thackeray than food, except drink. If there were a blue riband for the most committed consumer among major English authors, he would win it comfortably'. There's nothing to suggest that this might be a grosser claim than the one about irony, and the next claim announces itself with the greatest confidence of all: 'It can safely be said that Thackeray is the leading describer of buttons among English novelists'. Indeed Carey convinces us that this is so, if number, variety and brightness are the criteria. But aren't there other novelists who do more with their buttons? There are the buttons of the supposed Customs House officers in *Great Expectations*:

> 'Why, what do you make out that they done with their buttons then, Jack?' asked the landlord, vacillating weakly.
>
> 'Done with their buttons?' returned the Jack, 'Chucked 'em overboard. Swallered 'em. Sowed 'em, to come up small salad. Done with their buttons!'
>
> 'Don't be cheeky, Jack,' . . .
>
> 'A Custum 'Us officer knows what to do with his Buttons . . . when they comes betwixt him and his own light. . . .'

Even buttons that aren't there have, in Dickens' mind and art, a power of growth and suggestiveness, and are put to use, enlivening the sombre moving adventure down the river with its one comedy of character, a comedy which only intensifies the macabre Jack's power to call up the threat, as yet unrealized, that pursues Magwitch and Pip.

Of course Carey, like Professor Hardy, wants to suggest that Thackeray does know what to do with his buttons, and with other things, such as boots, gloves, hats and gooseberry bushes. 'The course of history could be observed through button-movements. As a matter of fact Thackeray's life coincided with a revolution in button manufacture.' In *Vanity Fair* 'buttons achieve a certain tragic dignity'; in *Philip* 'the button becomes violent'; but their chief claim to be 'frequently a great deal more important to him than either the clothes they fasten or their wearers' is their brightness. 'His sensitivity to light and his morals are intertwined', says Carey, in a very odd account of *Going to*

See a Man Hanged in which some onlookers, including Thackeray himself, are exonerated as attractive while others are repellent 'because they create a cruel, raucous light-effect with their shoulders'. 'Not precisely moral', says Carey. What precisely, though? 'A man's relations with his boots . . . are crucial to his destiny in a Thackeray novel'; vehicles bear 'much of the weight of characterization and social drama'. There's something in this, but Barbara Hardy thinks about it more in her chapter, 'The Expressive Things'. With Professor Carey there comes a sense that he's found a way to get a smile, and so does it again and again. He doesn't consider the claims of Isabel Archer's answer to Madame Merle in Chapter 19 of *The Portrait of a Lady*: when that lady speaks of her respect for things—'One's self—for other people—is one's expression of one's self; and one's house, one's furniture, one's garments, the books one reads, the company one keeps—these things are all expressive'—Isabel speaks for the freedom and privacy of the self: 'I don't know whether I succeed in expressing myself, but I know that nothing else expresses me. Nothing that belongs to me is any measure of me; everything's on the contrary a limit, a barrier, and a perfectly arbitrary one.' Isabel may learn better, or worse, but if we're to feel her fate for what it is, and feel for her, we must have some sympathizing respect for what Wordsworth calls 'the native and naked dignity of man'. Carey is so carefully cagey or ironic that I'm not sure if he has such a respect. He says of Thackeray's reactions to slavery 'he remained faithful—disgracefully faithful, some will feel—to his own first-hand experience'. Does Carey include himself in 'some'? His comment about 'automatic indignation and prejudice among the liberal-minded' suggests not. Again, '. . . to regard a person as a bundle of commodities might seem, to a champion of human dignity, an impoverishing delusion'. Is Carey not, then, one of these champions? The ironist says less than he means: we have to guess how much more Carey means. Thackeray, giving a detailed description of a cab, breaks off when he gets to the lining: '. . . but here we come too near the sanctity of private life'. His irony, I think, depends on the sane certainty that the lining of a cab isn't really such an intimate thing, that the 'sanctity of private life' can't really be violated so easily: otherwise what he says wouldn't be funny. But if Carey is being funny in the same way when he speaks of 'the more normal moral qualities of shoe-leather', doesn't this tend to subvert the case—which he doesn't quite argue—for the artistic seriousness of expressive things?

It's striking how many of Carey's apparent criteria sound gustatory: what he approves of is cool, prime, crisp and exhilarating, fresh, ripe, wholesome, 'limpid as water' or pungent and healthful; what he disapproves of is tepid, soggy, moist, whisky-and-water reminiscence, high-souled confections, characters with 'high-grade syrup' for blood operating in 'mixtures of dough and treacle' for the 'cream' of society, 'sweetening the acerbity'. 'Novels are sweets', Thackeray said—or savouries for those whose tastes are that way. Carey does—he must!—have positive criteria, but it is hard to be sure what they are or that they will stay put. Take the word 'decency'. 'With *Pendennis* a disastrous decency and simplicity overtake Thackeray's characters.' What Carey prefers in 'his confidence in reading the nastiness he detected in himself into his observation of others' so that 'one need not be especially ashamed'. Yet decency, respectability, wholesomeness are terms Carey is quite prepared to use himself, sometimes in rather odd ways. He finds the expression of Thackeray's unreasonable fury of hatred for beggars in Ireland 'a great deal more decent and respectable' than the later smug falsities about the comfort of the poor. He criticizes Thackeray's inability in *The Newcomes* to imagine the artist as engaged on anything 'serious or passionate', yet appears to respect his turning from social conscience novels, philanthropy, tragedy, the agonies and ecstacies of art, to the loving documentation of life's unremarkable processes . . . the decent solid pleasures of food and drink'. Thackeray's brief recognition that young Rawdon might need more from his mother than the fulfilment of 'one of woman's timeless roles as a displayer of commodities' is dismissed as 'a moist concession to the Victorian reader's pieties', yet Carey himself explains Thackeray's unresponsiveness to the 'vaunted artifacts' of Rome by saying that at the time he was thinking of the death of his baby daughter fifteen years before. The sense

E

of what's wet and what's decent is as unstable in Carey as in Thackeray—when is your heart allowed to go out in sympathy?

Carey finds Thackeray's contribution to the Victorian debate about the function of art important because it is 'negative, realistic and subversive'. The role he admires him in is far from a comfortable one—riling, puncturing, demolishing. Yet Thackeray turned from tragedy because 'What's the use of being uncomfortable?' 'What is it makes one so blasé and tired I wonder at thirty-eight?' Carey answers Thackeray: '. . . social and financial pressures . . . had betrayed him into abandoning his true creative bent'. Isn't it also possible that the burden of being negative (especially while maintaining a comfortable hedonism) itself weighed Thackeray down—depressed him into flatness and deadness ('Time has been killed' was Leavis's response to reading Thackeray) and, in reaction, to a desire for something more, for human dignity too solid to be seen through; a desire so desperate that it led to cant, to filling in falsely what he couldn't apprehend honestly?

University of Essex ELAINE JORDAN

AFFINITIES

Edward Thomas on the Countryside: A Selection of his Prose and Verse. Edited by ROLAND GANT. Faber and Faber, 1977; £4.95.

Here are three bits of prose by Edward Thomas:

> (*a*) And there, among the trees and their shadows, not understood, speaking a forgotten tongue, old dreads and formless awes and fascinations discover themselves and address the comfortable soul, troubling it, recalling to it unremembered years not so long past but that in the end it settles down into a gloomy tranquillity and satisfied discontent, as when we see the place where we were unhappy as children once. Druid and devilish deity and lean wild beast, harmless now, are revolving many memories with me under the strange, sudden red light in the old wood, and not more remote is the league-deep

72689

emerald sea-cave from the storm above than I am from the world.

(*b*) I think these travellers ought to be protected—say by the Zoological Society. Many of them are happy and they are at least as interesting, though often not as beautiful, as anything at the Zoo. They cost very little, being far too meek to steal much. For the price of a first-rate cigar one of them could be fed for a week, or a family for a bottle of wine. They give endless quiet amusement to civilized men who here behold what they have come from and what some of them would like to return to again. It seems to require some philosophy to sit high on the Downs on a rainy February day, reading half a sheet of a week-old daily paper, on the leeside of a copse which was once a chalk pit. I have seen the man several times, but never observed that anyone was sitting at his feet to learn his wisdom. He had not wife, nor other possessions, nor desire to converse. He was lean, dirty, quite unpicturesque and not strong, but he made the best of a wet February day. Most men would have preferred to be one of the chestnut horses ploughing near, their coats marked as with the hammer-marks on copper.

(*c*) The sonnet had become, in fact, so powerful a thing of itself that the chances were against a man who set out to use it as a medium of 'emotion recollected in tranquillity'. He might as well hope to be the saviour of mankind in a well-ironed silk hat.

(*a*) is from *The Heart of England*, 1906 (*b*) from 'Chalk Pits', 1911, (*c*) from the chapter 'Passion and Poetry' in *Feminine Influence on the Poets*, 1910. The first shows Thomas being literary about his feelings in an old wood; in the second, a quiet irony marks his observations on our 'civilized' attitude to 'these travellers', 'gypsies'; in the third he is considering sincerity and the vogue of Elizabethan sonneteering. Mr. Gant's selection of Thomas's prose and verse is entitled 'Edward Thomas on the Countryside', and therefore does not include anything from that substantial portion of the prose which is occasional and critical. Nevertheless the anthology has enough in it to attract any admirer of Thomas who has little or no access to the prose. It is arranged in four sections: 'Roads and Footpaths', 'The Lie of the Land', 'Figures in the Landscape', and 'Through the Year'.

It would be easy to quote passages by Thomas inspired mainly by rural nostalgia; it would be just as easy to quote passages marked by sharp criticism of that nostalgia. It would be impossible for anyone who has a reasonably full knowledge of Edward Thomas to see him as 'that unfortunate character, a man of letters, to whom no hardship or humiliation outweighs the romance of scraping a living from the printed word': Philip Larkin wrote that. Philip Toynbee is as bad: in the course of reviewing William Cooke's *Edward Thomas, A Critical Biography* (1970), he spoke of Thomas's 'nearly thirty books' as 'nearly all of them hack works of no merit whatever'. These remarks display ignorance and a ludicrous superiority: Edward Thomas was not essentially a 'man of letters' or a hack-writer. He was a man with his life-struggles like every other man, but endowed with that sort of rare sensitivity, intelligence and integrity which lead to true poetry. I find no difficulty in thinking of Thomas as a man who could talk without embarrassment with Conrad (whom he knew) and who could have talked without embarrassment with Lawrence (whom he admired). He can be discussed as we discuss Yeats, Eliot, Hardy and Rosenberg: anyone else, among poets, in our century?

Lawrence provides a centre. Nothing is on record, as far as I know, about any meeting between Thomas and Lawrence—there were near misses I believe—but Thomas alluded to him more than once as well as writing the perceptive review of *Love Poems and Others* in 1913. Writing to Gordon Bottomley's wife in 1912, he 'hopes that Gordon isn't become too classic to like Lawrence'; and Eleanor Farjeon, in her autobiographical *Edward Thomas: The Last Four Years,* says 'I had read *Sons and Lovers* and *The White Peacock*, and had heard Edward envy in the latter observations on nature which he wished he had observed for himself'. That 'envy' pays a tribute to both men. And for both men 'observation of nature' was wonderfully life-enhancing and creative, and ultimately not an end in itself but an agent in a wider and deeper purpose. Thomas never attempted the kind of profound poetic analysis of life and civilization which Lawrence achieved, but he had much more to say about 'the world' than has generally been recognized: his 'Swansea' (see *The Last Sheaf*) is strikingly like Lawrence's Tevershall.

But despite the marvellous life manifested in his response to natural phenomena, a response in which (I believe) he is the only one since Jefferies to be compared with Lawrence, self-analysis remained paramount in the poetry:

> There's nothing like the sun till we are dead

is the final line of a colourful and life-loving poem about November; it comes unexpected and throws a shadow over what has gone before. In reaction our minds may veer to Lawrence's final words in *Apocalypse* (which Malcolm Muggeridge finds 'reminiscent of *Mein Kampf*'):

> For man, the vast marvel is to be alive. For man, as for flower and beast and bird, the supreme triumph is to be most vividly, most perfectly alive. Whatever the unborn and the dead may know, they cannot know the beauty, the marvel of being alive in the flesh. The dead may look after the afterwards. But the magnificent here and now of life in the flesh is ours, and ours alone, and ours only for a time. We ought to dance with rapture that we should be alive and in the flesh, and part of the living, incarnate cosmos. I am part of the sun as my eye is part of me. That I am part of the earth my feet know perfectly, and my blood is part of the sea. . . .
>
> What we want is to destroy our false, inorganic connections, especially those related to money, and re-establish the living organic connection with the cosmos, the sun and earth, with mankind and nation and family. Start with the sun, and the rest will slowly, slowly happen.

That sort of hope was impossible for Thomas, but he would have felt the force of it in Lawrence (as Lawrence would have felt the reality of Thomas's state of feeling and mind behind the elaborated phrasings and cadences of the quoted passage (*a*)—which, at this point, please read again).

Then there is the war. Here is an excerpt from Lawrence's 'With the Guns' (he has been watching them practising):

> What work was there to do?—only mechanically to adjust the guns and fire the shot. What was there to feel?—only the unnatural suspense and suppression of serving a machine which, for aught we knew, was killing our fellow-men, whilst we stood there, blind, without knowledge or participation, subordinate to the cold machine. This was the glamour and the glory of the war: blue sky overhead and the living green country all around, but we, amid it all, a part in some iron insensate will, our flesh and blood, our soul and intelligence shed away, and all that remained of us a cold, metallic adherence to an iron machine. There was neither ferocity nor joy nor exultation nor exhilaration nor even quick fear: only a mechanical, expressionless movement. . . . It is a war of artillery, a war of machines, and men no more than the subjective material of the machine. It is so unnatural as to be unthinkable. Yet we must think of it.

Something of what Edward Thomas thought and felt, he an artilleryman in the front line, can be deduced from entries in his brief war-diary: 'All day loading shells from old position—sat doing nothing till I got damned philosophical and sad'; 'Fired 600 rounds and got tired eyes and ears'; 'Horrible night of bombardment'; 'Up at five worn out and wretched'. Pleasure or relief or joy—what *is* the word in a situation like that?—from fine weather and bird-song and clouds alternated with the discomforts and miseries. There is nothing in Thomas's prose and verse like the rich and powerful outspokenness of Rosenberg; but there is more than enough to show that all talk of 'fulfilment' for Thomas in war-activities is nonsense. And this is perhaps the point at which disagreement can be expressed with William Cooke's assessment of Thomas as essentially a war-poet. Mr. Cooke is here following Frost. Enough could be said too, if space allowed, to show that Thomas did *not* take Frost's advice and make poetry by dividing his prose into lines, and that he was already 'on the scent', as he himself told Frost in a letter, before the two men ever met. We ought not to forget that Edward Thomas started writing for his own interest in a notebook at the age of eight or nine, that he was writing little articles in his teens, that his first book was published when he was nineteen, and that his prose in general grew in strength and insight over a period of twenty-odd years.

One thing that Mr. Gant's selection—fifty-two prose pieces and twenty-one poems—brings home is the connection between the prose and the poetry, the affinity and the difference. Innumerable sensuous details in the prose, linked with thoughts and sentiments, reappear in the poetry, but they are now incorporated with an advance in expressiveness as marked as the change from what in the early work can be represented by a phrase like 'troubled tenderly by autumnal maladies of soul', to the self-revelation, delicate without being affected, of the poetry. I will offer, with a minimum of further comment, just two of the parallelisms:

> I was gathered up with an immortal company, where I and poet and lover and flower and cloud and star were equals. . . . (*Light and Twilight*)

And star and I and wind and deer
Are in the dark together—near,
Yet far—and fear
Drums on my ear
In that sage company drear. ('Out in the Dark')

In *The Heart of England* we have 'the ghostly white cow-parsley flowers suspended on unseen stalks'; in the poetry we have this:

. . . When I turn away, on its fine stalk
Twilight has fined to naught, the parsley flower
Figures, suspended still and ghostly white,
The past hovering as it revisits the light.
('It Rains')

A reading of the essays and the poems in which these passages occur would show the experiences in the poems to have a range and a depth which go beyond discursive statement and 'observation', however keen.

For me, Mr. Gant's book, while not representing the full scope of either Edward Thomas's prose or verse, gives abundant evidence that the poet is there from the start. It was helpful to Thomas to have Frost's encouragement, as it was helpful to Frost to have Thomas's support in companionship and in print. But to say as Frost did that Thomas's poetry 'ought to be called Roads to France', and to say as William Cooke does while quoting Frost—it is the would-be clinching sentence of his book—'His remark leaves no doubt as to the true origin of Thomas's poetry', is to get the perspective wrong and to miss the essence; it ignores all that 'origin' must comprehend—parents, temperament, environment, preoccupations and sustained interests, inborn sensitivity, and so on. *Edward Thomas on the Countryside* would help anyone interested in Thomas not to fall for a simple external explanation of his late superb flowering in poetry. It's what we have that matters anyway, not explanations of origin. And 'Edward Thomas on the Countryside' is a poet who not only gives us a countryside and a Nature which offer a healthy freshness and a beauty in stark contrast to what our motor-men and politicians and fashionable educationalists and oil-men offer, as sheikhs and pop-stars buy up large old English houses with their trees and fields and streams; while giving us his countryside he also becomes a spokesman for some of our own central thoughts, moods, doubts. He is a creative life-enhancer. Neither his 'melancholy' nor his precision nor the realistic truthfulness of his fine rich senses is a bar to his sense of wonder and mystery: the poetry unites all.

Cheltenham H. COOMBES

POUND'S POLITICS

Ezra Pound: The Last Rower, A Political Profile. By C. DAVID HEYMANN. The Viking Press, New York, 1976, $12.50; Faber and Faber, £5.95.

Pound's politics are a problem for the literary critic in a way Dante's or Milton's religious views are not. The *Endlösung*, the Holocaust, the fascist genocide of six million European Jews in the nineteen-thirties and forties, is such a fundamental factor in our twentieth-century consciousness that anyone connected, however remotely, with this systematic slaughter becomes the focus of ferocious ideological dispute. The logic of critical discussion is almost helpless before the emotional impact of this. (The only analogy one can think of is the way that the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki cast such doubts on the nature of technological research that W. H. Auden, when Professor of Poetry in Oxford, could state publicly that there were some secrets of nature that should never be explored or published.) Arguably there are similar enormities in the history of civilization. Internecine strife between Christian sects; the systematic extermination by whites of Tasmanian and Australian aboriginals, of Amerindians by U.S. settlers and soldiers, of the Ainu by the Japanese; the elimination of political opponents by Cromwell, Stalin, Franco, not to mention assorted Latin American and African dictators; all of these would presumably add up to more than six million dead. Melos, Drogheda, Glencoe, Dresden, Wounded Knee, the Gulag Archipelago, My Lai, Leningrad, to cite but a few familiar names, should reverberate as resonantly in our imaginations as Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau, and Zyklon gas. But they do not. Scale counts; quantity takes on the aspect of quality, particularly when we are dealing with the quality of evil. Six million Jews were methodically done to death over a period of ten (or less) years; a hundred thousand Japanese were incinerated in a few seconds in 1945. Man's inhumanity to man is plain in both cases, but since history is the propaganda of the victors, President Truman is still honoured, despite Elizabeth Anscombe's attempt to deny him his honorary doctorate at Oxford in the fifties, and Hitler is regarded, rightly, as the blot on the face of twentieth-century civilization. (So far! The next major leader in the so-called civilized world who is impelled to such destruction since he will have at his disposal atomic, hydrogen, cobalt, and neutron bombs, will probably make Hitler, in the eyes of history—if any history is thereafter possible—look like a beginner.)

All this is prelude to an examination of the case of Ezra Pound. Pound suffered for his anti-semitism, and for his alleged treason against the United States during wartime, which were not unconnected (his remarks on F. D. Roosevelt provide the bridge). He had Jewish friends such as Louis Zuchofsky; he personally never lifted a finger against any Jews in concentration camps; and, in his last years, he recanted of his bourgeois anti-Semitism ('But the worst mistake I made was that stupid, suburban prejudice of anti-Semitism'; see M. Reck, 'A Conversation between Ezra Pound and Allen Ginsberg', *Evergreen Review*, no. 57, June, 1968). Nevertheless his punishment was several months incarceration in a steel pen in the U.S. Army Disciplinary Training Center near Pisa; commitment for almost thirteen years to St. Elizabeth's Hospital for the Criminally Insane in Washington, D.C.; and, in my opinion, a serious artistic breakdown (after *Canto XXX*) in what might have been one of the most important literary achievements of the twentieth century. A heavy price to pay for a shallow and prejudiced ideological commitment. Few writers of the left or the right, outside Russia and Spain, paid so heavily. By comparisons such minor abrasions as the opprobrium heaped upon him after the award of Bollingen Prize in 1949 for *The Pisan Cantos* seem nothing. Yet no one can deny that Pound, particularly in the early thirties and forties, was an enthusiastic supporter of Fascism as exemplified by Mussolini, the ally of Adolph Hitler. And Hitler bears the ultimate responsibility (despite recent attempts to argue for his relative innocence or ignorance) for the systematic extermination of the Jews in the lands under his control.

Heymann therefore, being Jewish himself, has embarked on a difficult task and the result is a tolerably good introduction to the problem for the student and a work of some interest to those familiar with Pound's work and the vast secondary material that it has attracted. Most of this interest, it must be said, lies in the fresh information Heymann has been able to obtain from various private individuals and from such files (not least those of the F.B.I.) as the recent Freedom of Information Act in the United States has made available to him. But it is emphatically *not* the 'major new biography of one of the great poets of our age' that the blurb promises. This will require considerably more *Sitzfleisch*, and now perhaps less 'legwork'.

Despite the publisher's claims, Heymann's main object, one discovers on page x, is to discuss the case against

Pound for treason to the United States and offer a sort of *apologia*. The 81 pages ('Settings') which he devotes to Pound's earlier life between 1885 and 1939 are therefore a perfunctory pastiche. They have the merit of citing the *Cantos* and Pound's critical works where appropriate, but tend towards the hagiographical; in effect, Heymann gives us a *pot-pourri* of contemporary and later quotations and gossip, generally redounding to Pound's credit. There is a heavy reliance on Pound's letters and on such books as Hugh Kenner's *The Pound Era* (1971). Since Pound was an inveterate *poseur*, this might have been dangerous for the biographer. Fortunately Heymann makes no pretence of being this, but simply adds to the standard accounts given by Norman, Stock, Reck, Kenner *et al* (all duly acknowledged on p. 356), his gleanings from unpublished letters in various collections.

The importance of these first impressionistic pages is that Heymann makes clear how early the economic obsessions of Pound drove him towards Fascism, particularly when he arrived in Italy in those seductive days when Mussolini was supposedly making the trains run on time. He also documents Pound's great interest in the financial difficulties of his fellow artists (Eliot and Joyce, for example). Heymann resists the temptation to indulge in psychohistory and makes no connection between the coprolalia of certain *Cantos* written in the thirties and Pound's obsession at that time with monetary theory and indeed with money itself. He assiduously skirts the question as to whether Pound by this time was not somewhat crazy, although references to meetings with him (quoted by Heymann) might well lead to this conclusion. He does see that *A Draft of Cantos XXXI–XLI* (published in 1934) is full of hate, but his discussion of this is brief and apologetic. 'Everything considered, Pound is in a real sense, a nature poet, whose inhumanity is the inhumanity of the world, but whose sensitivity, the signs of his intense and persistent attention to the cosmos, can be found on almost any page of the œvre.' [*sic*]

Heymann's *apologia* seems to amount to this: Pound's maieutic services to English and American men of letters (Eliot, Frost, and Joyce, for example) far outweigh his naive economic and political views and pronouncements, which led him to espouse the cause of fascism. Heymann's remarks on the case of T. S. Eliot are exceptionally crisp and informative.

Equally crisp are Heymann's comments on Pound's attraction to the theory of Social Credit, which led indirectly to his anti-semitism, since it was an assumption of Douglas and Orage that Financial Credit, as opposed to Real Credit, was in the power of the banks, and therefore in the hands of rich Jewish banking families such as the Rothschilds. Hence Pound's obsessions as seen, e.g., at the end of Canto XXXV.

Most of the book is concerned with the years after 1939, with Pound's final visit to the United States to head off the coming war; his broadcasts on Italian radio; his capture and incarceration—first in the Detention Training Center near Pisa, and then in St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington from 1945 to 1958. Heymann is here heavily indebted to such partial biographers as Julian Cornell and Michael Reck, but he does manage to add further material to their surveys of Pound's legal case.

Heymann furnishes in the opening pages of *Inferno* a good sketch of Pound's enormous, if often misdirected, energy. He describes how Pound would write for any periodical that would publish him, not excluding Communist and leftist periodicals. (He makes no mention of Eva Hesse's attempt to accentuate the leftist elements in Pound's thinking.) Pound's mania centred around two things: money, and consequently around those he thought controlled and caused wars and other catastrophes (mostly Jews) and those he thought could better control it and avert wars, namely the fascist leaders; the other obsession was art in all its forms and the limitations imposed upon its production by commercialism and the lack of money for true artists. As though ignorant of Nazi book burnings and control of the visual arts, Pound was obviously flattered by Mussolini's spurious appreciation of his work ('*Ma quest'é divertente*').

What makes one dissatisfied with this richly documented volume? It avoids the issues and so is not a truly critical biography. It quotes lavishly from the *Cantos* in order to relate them to Pound's life, but rarely ventures a critical judgment on the segments quoted, except for brief quotations from other critics. Although supposedly a 'political profile', there is no substantial discussion of Pound's political views and only hints of how he came to espouse them. The best discussion I know of is William M. Chace, *The Political Identities of Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot*, Stanford, 1973.) In brief there are too many names casually dropped, too many documents (useful though some of these are), too many useless quotations, which combine to hamper the clear-sighted and objective discussion that Heymann's title leads us to expect.

The style, I should add, is impressionistic, Cantoesque, and frequently just bad. This, as everyone knows, is an occupational hazard for writers on Pound. I cite one example from p. 9:

> A photograph of the 'redoubtable' relative astride the mule remained in Ezra Pound's possession, found its way post-St. Elizabeth's to his tower suite atop Schloss Brunnenburg, his daughter's castle in northern Italy, and then, in 1961, to his third-story studio in Venice.
>
> Their voyage, recorded by Pound in letters home, had all the makings of a Baedeker Grand Tour—London, Brussels, Cologne, a journey down the Rhine to Bingen and Mainz, a stay in the Alps (Lucerne and Como), a side trip to Tangiers, and finally Naples, Rome, Florence. and Venice. It was this last port of call: 'the Queen of the Adriatic'—which was to play so vital a role as major segment and locus of the poet's luminous dream: 'Venice struck me as an agreeable place—as, in fact, more agreeable than Wyncote, Pa., or "47th" and Madison Avenue'.

Similarly pretentiousness abounds. Here are two examples from the opening pages:

> To retrace the Homeric 'periplum', to strike at Dantescan roots: it was his way perhaps of redeeming time, of consolidating events—in short, of making his life cohere. (p. 3)

In the soundproof rooms of the Jupiter and Chestnut Street Mint the future versifier was already interested in

> exact detail: 'I like the idea of the fineness of the metal, and it moves by analogy to the habit of testing verbal manifestations'. Seen in a different light, and in a suitable altered context, this might have been Aristophanes speaking. (p. 8)

The book is well produced and, in view of the many well-chosen photographs, it is relatively cheap. The lack of a bibliography (or list of works referred to) is only partially compensated by an extensive index.

In sum, this is the work of a young enthusiast who has read most of the material, tracked down more, but has been unable generally to see the wood for the trees—or at least guide the reader to a proper vantage point. Inside this thick volume there is a thin book struggling to get out.

J. P. Sullivan

State University of New York at Buffalo

THE ROLE OF RHYTHM

Words into Rhythm. By D. W. Harding. Cambridge University Press, 1976; £5.95.

In the May 1932 number of *Scrutiny* the 'Notes on Contributors' said 'D. W. Harding is researching on rhythm at the British Institute of Industrial Psychology'. In the 1971–1972 Clark Lectures Professor Harding presented some of the fruits of a forty years' consideration, consideration given both as a psychologist and as a literary critic, of the role of rhythm in our utterance and action. Those lectures, revised and expanded for publication, are now published as *Words into Rhythm*. The patience of Professor Harding's long application to his task shows again and again in the measured calm of his proceeding, the authoritative lightness with which he disposes of his less skilful predecessors.

Much of the argument of the opening chapters is to be found in his 1946 essay on 'The rhythmical intention in Wyatt's Poetry' (*Scrutiny*, XIV. 2) though it isn't any the less vigorous for its venerable age. Professor Harding exposes the emptiness of several previous attempts to account for the expressiveness of rhythm in literature; he also gives us the expected ration of prosodist-bashing. The most interesting of these skirmishes seems to me his deft investigation of the notions of 'expectancy' and 'deviation' as they are used to explain rhythmic expressiveness. The general run of such explanations would, I suppose, be something like this: in reading a poem we are quickly alerted to what the metrical norm for each line is; by a process of aesthetic induction we infer that metrical futures will resemble metrical pasts and so, when a line appears which doesn't conform to our grounded expectations, we experience the line as deviant, and expressive in that deviation. But Harding rightly observes that 'as far as we anticipate anything about the rhythm of good verse we anticipate variety; it is only in doggerel that we expect complete regularity'. Only the prosodist with his numbingly comfortable anticipations of regularity occasionally spiced with a passing 'licence' or 'substitution' is surprised by variety. Harding has a still stronger argument against relying on the explanatory powers of 'expectation' and 'deviation': 'Recalling some of the extensive and subtle effects attributed to rhythm by critics . . . we can reasonably ask *how* expectation or anticipation operates to produce them. Those who give such weight to expectancy ought to show in some detail what it may be supposed to do and how it works'.

That expectancy and the feelings attendant on its satisfaction or disappointment are an important element of the emotion in which we read literature will hardly be denied. This emotion-cluster has assumed an exaggerated centrality in aesthetics, though, in the work of those aestheticians who wish to explain all aesthetic effects in terms of rules and their infringement, or codes and their breaking. (Probably the best-known example of such a project is Gombrich's *Art and Illusion* where the notions of 'repertoire' and variation within a repertoire play the part that metre and rhythmic variation play for the prosodists.) Such writers don't bother to explain why some rules are tolerable as principles of conduct and others not, why some codes are intelligible bearers of certain kinds of message and others not. What makes a rule feasible or a code possible? What is the substantial ground of our assent to a particular artistic convention? If these questions were sufficiently asked the natty comprehensiveness of the conventionalist account would soon disappear. Professor Harding's inspection of the pretensions of 'expectancy' and 'deviation' has wider consequences than the refutation of a few theories about metre and rhythm.

Words into Rhythm presents an alternative explanation of the expressiveness of rhythm: 'It seems to me probable that, rather than according directly with particular emotional states, rhythm reflects—or, more probably, is itself part of—the energy conditions that accompany emotion'. It isn't really clear what these 'energy conditions' are. I think Professor Harding means us to understand them as features of the behavioural dispositions which he regards as attendant on emotional states. Thus, if I am angry, I may have a disposition to stamp my feet, throw things and so on; these are all energetic actions and so my 'energy condition' might be described as 'prone to energy discharge', and contrasted with, say, brooding grief which would be described as 'energy-retentive'. But does this vocabulary have any genuine explanatory power? To say of the Lewisham riots that 'there was a lot of energy discharge going on in South London' would tell us only about the blankly professionalizing attitude of the speaker. To make these energy-predicates mean anything they have to be set in a vocabulary less conveniently hygienic, one that returns us from energy to emotion. If we are to understand anything relevant by such a term as 'energy discharge' we shall have to understand how people behave when they are angry, amongst other things, and we shall have to understand their behaviour as more integrally part of their anger than a mere 'accompaniment' could be. What sets out to be explanatory, the vocabulary of 'energy', turns out to be simply parasitic on our previous understanding of what it tries to explain, the ordinary vocabulary of emotion and its expression.

Professor Harding is expertly aware of that vocabulary, speaking of 'such qualities of action as surprise, hesitancy or conflict, flowing ease, conviction, impetuosity, forceful determination, wavering uncertainty, disengaged lightness of touch, crisp finality'. But he is caught between his honest knowledge and his theory. The dangers for a literary critic of that theory and its idiom can be illustrated by his comparison of Brutus rounding on Cassius:

> All this! ay, more: fret till your proud heart break;
> Go show your slave how choleric you are,
> And make your bondsmen tremble. Must I budge?
> (*Julius Caesar*, IV, iii. 42–50)

with Claudio's

> Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
> To lie in cold obstruction and to rot . . .
> (*Measure for Measure*, III, i. 117 ff.)

He says of the two passages that they 'differ in their component rhythms— the short units like repeated blows from Brutus, Claudio's longer shudderings—but the torrent of energy unites them'. If torrents of energy serve only to unite what should be kept apart, then torrents of energy be dammed. To mistake the spare, unsparing rhythms of Brutus's excited virtue for Claudio's awakening recoil—the overtness of the one as against the inwardness of the other (Claudio's speech being the more effective as a plea exactly because he seems in his considerations almost to have forgotten that he addresses Isabella)—is a fault that Professor Harding is eager not to commit, as his 'blows' and 'shudderings' attest, but his torrent sweeps all reservation before it.

The real attractiveness for Professor Harding of the theory of 'energy conditions' is, I'm afraid, that the phrase has the sound of something accessible to the measurings of the empirical psychologist. Of course, Professor Harding is quite free of any brash hopefulness about the helpfulness of empirical psychology to the literary critic. He is quick to circumscribe psychology's pretensions with a lively awareness of the complexities at issue: 'The rhythmical resources of language are too numerous and varied, and too complex in their possible interactions, to be handled in a simple framework of pre-arranged categories'. But the project of a psychological investigation which would tidy away our critical doubts obviously appeals to him: 'In all our judgements about the expressive quality of a rhythm we are guessing and fumbling; there is no certainty that the rhythm is doing more to us than we, with our subjective interpretation, are doing to it. And if someone else fails to experience it as we do, or interprets it differently, that may or may not be because he is insufficiently sensitive or practised. Experimental work on the expressive quality of language rhythms seems not to have been done, although good instrumental resources are now available; and it should be possible, for instance, to identify characteristic patterns, if there are any, arising in known emotional states.' These 'known emotional states' sound ominously like materials for the 'simple framework of pre-existent categories' that Professor Harding warns intending researchers against. It is, in any case, not right to imply that empirical research on this topic could eventually show interesting results. As Wittgenstein says, 'The confusion and barrenness of psychology is not to be explained by calling it a "young science". . . . For in psychology there are experimental methods and *conceptual confusion*. The existence of the experimental method makes us think we have the means of solving the problems which trouble us; though problem and method pass one another by' (*Philosophical Investigations*, II, xiv).

Critical disagreement is not the weakness of our discipline; it is its strength. And kindly offers from psychologists will not help literary criticism, they will only paralyse it. For our conflicting attitudes to a rhythmic effect are part of conflicts of values which it is literary criticism's privilege to undergo; that can be seen clearly enough when the necessary critical vocabulary for discussing rhythm is remembered, for it is, preponderantly, a moral vocabulary. Professor Harding doesn't try to escape that. His pages are an ample catalogue of the moral vocabulary to which I refer: 'a more depressed finality', 'an almost jaunty alternation of stress'. 'Here it could certainly be claimed that the line division contributes to the self-mockery'. But he is unwilling to acknowledge that the sort of investigation for which empirical psychology is fitted simply isn't adapted to studying the logic of our moral emotions. Such researches do not explain our language of moral emotion, they merely substitute a different language, a less responsive one. Professor Harding has commented on that process himself in his *Social Psychology and Individual Values*:

'... the tendency here, as elsewhere in psychology, has been towards impoverishing a rich and psychologically subtle language in return for a not very illuminating generalization'.

Words into Rhythm has enough literary-critical skill about it to make one wish it had more. I'm not complaining of a want of ability in Professor Harding's book but of the way in which his conceived project has denied his deep, genuine powers the extended display they deserve, powers that are more in evidence in, say, 'Donne's Anticipation of Experience' (the first chapter of *Experience into Words*), or in his masterly 'Regulated Hatred: An Aspect of the Work of Jane Austen' (*Scrutiny*, VIII, 4). Too often, as he himself is soberly aware—'These are no more than rough indications—far removed from the subtlety and complexity of serious literature'—he only sketches in an account of a poem; its interest cannot but be, in the terms he has set himself, merely illustrative. Thus, after an exemplary description of the fourth section of *The Dry Salvages* and its 'analogical enactment' of sea-swell and the sea-bell, he just notes: 'It scarcely needs adding that such a suggestion of external movement would be no more than a virtuoso exhibition if it were not intimately appropriate to other aspects of this section of the poem. The contrasting forms of movement it offers, the restlessness and the steady swing, accord with the busy concerns of sea traffic and with the necessity for acquiescence in the facts of death and mourning'. But in what ways *is* the movement of the verse 'intimately appropriate' to these unspecified 'other aspects'? You would have to consider more at length the nature of the 'acquiescence' Eliot exacts from us through his rhythmic exactitudes, you would have to extend your concerns to ask in what ways the sense of control over the elements that the control of rhythm gives here relates to the intractable river of the first section of *The Dry Salvages*, if you wanted to fill out that asserted appropriateness. Consider the second section of the poem:

> Where is the end of them, the fishermen sailing
> Into the wind's tail, where the fog cowers?
> We cannot think of a time that is oceanless
> Or of an ocean not littered with wastage
> Or of a future that is not liable
> Like the past, to have no destination.

> We have to think of them as forever bailing,
> Setting and hauling, while the North East lowers
> Over shallow banks unchanging and erosionless . . .

Like the section Harding quotes, this marvellously hazardous lyric (it needs to be looked at in full) deals in the relations of faith and danger, tracing that return of belief upon itself, the contours of scepticism, in our sense of each verse as in itself effortlessly secure, a sense which is then controverted when we realise the strenuous verbal construction which links one verse to the next. The construction of a security, then, is both conveyed and eroded by the extreme contrivance, the contrivance *in extremis*, of the rhythm and rhyme-scheme. The extraordinary feeling that the verses are unrhymed in themselves but rhyming in their sequence is an exercise in the understanding of faith for the reader as he or she finds it now serene, something that has happened, now something fiercely brought into being, created though not factitious. The rhythms and assurance of the fourth section have in comparison something lazy about them, I think; the difference between the two sections is the difference between the virtue of patience and the 'mental sloth', to use Eliot's phrase, of acquiescence. Considering matters like this, following through the uses of rhythm in self-doubt and self-persuasion, you get a sense of the importance of rhythm in Eliot's poetry that couldn't be expressed in a detailing of 'rhythmic effects'. In the brilliant brief note on grammatical ambiguity in *Ash Wednesday* and *Burnt Norton* (collected as 'Words and Meanings' in *Experience into Words*), Professor Harding has written some of the best criticism of Eliot we have; his long acquaintance with Eliot's poetry, co-terminous with his own work on rhythm, ought surely to have produced a more critically thoughtful book. It hasn't, and one can only be surprised and sorry. For to make the complaints I have made about *Words into Rhythm* is, after all, to pay Professor Harding the compliment of high but disappointed expectations.

Christ's College
Cambridge

ERIC GRIFFITHS

MISLEADING CASES

Children Of The Sun. A Narrative of Decadence in England After 1918. By MARTIN GREEN. Constable, 1977; £7.50.

Mr. Green purports to describe the 'imaginative history' of England between 1918 and 1957, seeing it as a 'cultural dialectic' between the 'dandy-aesthetes' and the 'anti-dandies'. He describes the former as representing the culture's 'thesis' (dominant 'temperament') and the latter as supporting its 'antithesis'. Into the first group he puts two 'gangs', one led by Harold Acton, Brian Howard, Connolly, Quennell, Waugh and Betjeman, the other by Auden, Isherwood, Spender and John Lehmann. The antithesis is represented by Leavis, Orwell and, sometimes, Lawrence who, along with the Georgian and Victorian forbears of the 'gangs' and their more conventional contemporaries, stand for 'seriousness' and 'maturity'. The argument of the book revolves around the careers of Acton and Howard as the cultural leaders of the 'thesis'.

Here, however, he runs into difficulties: the 'dandyism' of Acton is different in kind from that of Auden. The first gang, then, must be termed 'dandy-aesthete'; the second, '*naïf*'. The 'cult of the *naïf*', he assures us, was 'at the very core of Thirties' Marxism—the image of the sun-bronzed young man with his shirt open, bringing the radiant candour of his gaze to bear on the mess the fathers have made of the world'. But even this is not comprehensive enough. What about Beaverbrook and Winston Churchill? What about Peter Rodd and Randolph Churchill? They must naturally form another sub-section: 'uncles' and 'rogue-rebels'. Mr. Green clearly expects us to take all this seriously. Indeed, he goes to such lengths to substantiate his theory that, but for his generous linguistic absurdities, we might be bored into concurrence.

One's suspicions, however, are immediately aroused by the indecisive and immature nature of his critical vocabulary. The text is studded with phrases such as 'media-happening', 'rhythms of the earth', 'very philistine', 'a highly aesthetic education', 'a very Twenties' marriage', and so on. It soon becomes clear from the accumulation of factual error and facile generalisation that he has taken on a subject beyond his intellectual control. The whole is pervaded by the amateurish enthusiasms and contradictions of the committed dabbler. 'My interest', he states, [is] ' "psychological" rather than anthropological. . . . My method is closer to that cultural, or cultic, literary criticism that we might associate with Orwell . . .'. In Appendix B, where he explains the origin of the term '*Sonnenkinder*', he admits to 'treating anthropology very cavalierly' in selecting the word to describe the gangs. But this arbitrary extrapolation is the basis of his method.

Children Of The Sun is certainly not the product of research. It offers us almost no new information but rather a re-ordering of already published accounts. The author candidly admits his enormous debt to Harold Acton's two volumes of autobiography *Memoirs* and *More Memoirs Of An Aesthete,* and to Marie-Jacqueline Lancaster's biography of Brian Howard: *Portrait Of A Failure.* The futility of the whole project is in fact revealed by this absurd selection of protagonists. It was Acton and Howard, he considers, who governed the aesthetic sensibility of the important Oxford generation of 1922–25 which included such easily-led men as Waugh, Powell, Graham Greene, Henry Yorke (Green), Betjeman, and Connolly. It was they who set up the 'thesis', of which the 'rogues' expressed a peripheral aspect and against which the *naïfs,* and Orwell, Leavis and *Scrutiny* reacted. This theory would seem either to stand or fall on the concept of the dandy.

Here again he reverts immediately to a published work, Ellen Moers's *The Dandy* (1960), which defines its subject as 'A man dedicated solely to his own perfection through a ritual of taste . . . free of all human commitments that conflict with that taste: passions, moralities, ambitions, politics or occupations'. Earlier, however, Mr. Green has stated that the 'simplest psychological fact at the root of this cult is that worship of the male adolescent by older men . . . expressed in the myths of Narcissus, Adonis, and such . . . One manifestation of this we call dandyism. In its simplest form the young man loves his own beauty and makes it insolently manifest in his own clothes, posture, manners, judgements, imposing on everything a style that denies the "mature" values of his father and mother'. These two definitions are partly contradictory. In one is expressed an ascetic aestheticism, in the other a passionate indulgence and this confusion, surely, springs from a mis-interpretation of the word 'aesthete'.

'The aesthete', Mr. Green says, 'is crucially different from the dandy in being much more concerned with something outside himself—art, beauty, the cultural heritage; he need not be so hard and "heroically" negative. His energies go into receiving impressions and sensations rather than into making them . . .'. So the 'aesthete' is by definition the critic, a Lord Henry Wotton, and not the artist. Mr. Green is aware of the problem. Was not Wilde both artist and aesthete, and were not Acton, Betjeman, Quennell and Howard poets? Surely Evelyn Waugh described himself as an aesthete? The answer is simple. 'In this study', he states, 'we shall regard the two types as twin aspects of one identity—the dandy-aesthete.' The whole of the preliminary discussion is thus devalued. He faithfully reports Acton's rejection of the cultural ethos of the Nineties at Oxford but does not realise that the 'aesthete' of his own definition is specifically a product of that period and earlier. He establishes the connexions between Acton and the Sitwells, between the Sitwells and Firbank, and between Firbank and Wilde but fails to notice that Acton and those he influenced, while admiring Firbank, loathed Wilde. In a *Harper's Bazaar* article (3 Nov., 1930, pp. 50–1, 98), for instance, Waugh saved his bitterest attack for 'the great, booby figure of Oscar Wilde'. This condemnation of effeminacy, languor and egotism was not peculiar to Waugh. It was something, along with his taste for early Gothic architecture and early-Victoria furnishings, that he inherited from Acton at Oxford.

Acton himself wrote an article for *The Cherwell* ('Tchekov And Some Undergraduates', 17 Nov., 1923, p. 78) defending the Russian playright and fiercely attacking the world of 1892: '. . . when the *Yellow Book*, Symbolism, Oscar Wilde, Art for Art's Sake and all the pathetically self-conscious, arty little movements and littérateurs were waving weakly [sic] flags and posturing like the protagonists in a "crime passionnel"'. Both Acton and Waugh despised *poseurs*; they re-defined the term 'aesthete' to include a more cosmopolitan and aggressive attitude to art in reaction to the fatuity of the Nineties and the tea-party cosiness and patronage of London literary cliques. Mr. Green's nineteenth-century definition is wholly inappropriate.

Waugh drew, Mr. Green says, like Beardsley. He did not. He was self-consciously *avant-garde*. Waugh's 1963 remark about regarding writing 'not as an investigation of character but as an exercise in the use of language' is said to be misleading: 'His interest in language was not of the kind active then in critical circles. . . . His concern for language must be taken as another example of that old-fashioned provinciality that he perversely cultivated'. This is a complete misrepresentation. Waugh's 1929 essay on Firbank and his 1930 book reviews in the *Graphic* lucidly display an interest in linguistic experimentation in company with Van Vechten, Osbert Sitwell, Gerhardie and Hemingway. Waugh was always a great champion of Eliot and of Henry Green, lambasting those with 'school ma'am minds' who objected to the latter's disjointed prose.

It is this sort of basic inaccuracy, this failure to see each character in his jigsaw as an individual, that causes Mr. Green's overall thesis to founder, even though he does grasp fragments of the truth. There is something in Acton's and Howard's influence at Oxford, and in 'the common cause of defying their fathers' mode of seriousness'. Mr. Green, however, pretends, with insufficient research, to have the full picture. He fails even to distinguish satisfactorily between Acton and Howard as 'influences', the latter being in fact little more than a dangerous dilettante. Michael Arlen, a genuine literary dandy, is alluded to only briefly because he was not influenced by either. Waugh, who is regarded throughout as 'the keenest observer and commentator on our subject in our period', began aesthetically to move away from Acton after the publication of *Decline and Fall* (1928).

Mr. Green sees things on the grand scale of social history and foolishly attempts to interpret individual action within this framework. His vast canvas includes not only local literary figures but the political and scientific communities of the world. The Manhattan Project is directly compared to the decadence and inefficiency of MI5 at Wormwood Scrubs during the last war—Oppenheimer was a 'dandy' as were Burgess, Maclean and Philby. It is at this point that the shaky critical structure of the book finally collapses. Earlier passages might have warned us: 'And roughly at the same time as Edward the Eighth abdicated, T. E. Lawrence died in a road accident'. There is always an inept hand attempting to re-organize chance into fate.

Mr. Green's problem is that he is really writing two potentially sensible books. One is about the influence of the Sitwells, Diaghilev and Eliot on Acton's Oxford generation. The other concerns the general movements of social and literary history after the Great War. The two are connected by the most tenuous of threads—the careers of Acton and Howard—and to disguise this Mr. Green constantly dives into tenebrous cul-de-sacs to emerge, triumphant, with irrelevancies. We are treated to a long history of Stanford White (Acton's grandfather), Frank Gassaway (possibly the first husband of Howard's paternal grandmother), and Esmond Romily 'who ended up reviewing books about dogs'. The section on Gassaway describes him as 'the American Kipling' and includes two lengthy quotations but concludes by admitting that 'it seems [Howard] . . . never actually read him'.

The book ends with three 'conversations' entitled 'Confessions and Conclusions'. 'I chose the decent man,' he says, 'turned my back on the dandies, and never till now asked myself what it felt to be like them. Finding out has been interesting. But finishing the book leaves me with the uneasy feeling that the subject has gone academic on me, that it had ceased to be a living problem, a living part of my past.' He need not fear that the book has become 'academic' if by that he means 'scholarly'. The real dilemma is that he has fallen half in love with the easeful dandy and finds it difficult to admit to this irrational infatuation.

The 'Prologue' describes his visit to La Pietra, Sir Harold Acton's Florentine palace. He goggles at the sheer scale of the ornamentation, and having nothing in his aesthetic vocabulary to deal with the Baroque and Rococo, describes the room he is given by listing its dimensions and contents in the form of an inventory. He finds the effect 'quite stupefying' and is visibly impressed by an invitation to lunch with deposed European royalty. The book itself is partly an intellectual justification of this indulgence in snobbery, partly an attempt at literary exorcism.

The three conversations, however, do nothing but convince us that Mr. Green has trailed slavishly after Leavis. We have throughout sensed the gradual disintegration of his argument and his own awareness of its inadequacy. The sad little footnotes (pp. 67, 239–240, and 317) redefining his terms were miserable attempts to patch it up. Following Leavis, we learn, he had approved of Amis as a force for sanity and 'maturity' complementing the Great Tradition. Now that Amis admits to liking Waugh's irreverence he is confused. Nabokov seems to be his only hope for the future.

Mr. Green is doubly handicapped. Firstly, the puritanical limitations of 'cultural-moral' criticism have refused him a sense of humour and a delight in luxury; secondly, he believes the critic's task is 'to discover and be in the thick of the crucial debate of the time'. The latter concept is, surely, dangerous for it presumes there to be a 'crucial debate' constantly in progress. It requires for its argument 'groups', 'movements', 'themes', which the individual artist of real worth may dislike because of the originality of his vision. For Mr. Green, however, if the 'crucial debate' does not exist then he must invent it. One might, perhaps, with all humility, direct him to a passage from 'Fan-Fare', Waugh's mordant reply (in the magazine *Life*) to the aesthetic ineptitudes of his admirers. Asked if he considered his characters 'typical' he replied:

> 'No . . . I do not. . . . Do not ask yourself, when you read a story: "Is this the behaviour common to such and such an age-group, income-group, psychologically—conditioned group?", but: "Why did these particular people behave in this particular way?" Otherwise you are wasting your time in reading works of imagination at all.'

MARTIN STANNARD

University of Edinburgh

The Critical Forum

MORALISMS

I fail to recognise myself in the A. L. French who, according to S. Gorley Putt (review of Harriet Hawkins's *Poetic Freedom and Poetic Truth, E in C,* April, 1977), is a 'moralist' creating 'webs of simplistic Sunday-school prattle'. I had been under the impression that I had myself been tilting against such moralists for some years, and on looking up what I said about *Hamlet* in *Shakespeare and the Critics* I find that I took several moralists to task for doing the very thing I am now accused of doing.

The comment on the 'flights of angels' speech came in the course of a detailed commentary on the last scene and on the difficulty of making sense of it. I did not, and do not, think that the simple response suggested by Horatio's words is adequate to the Hamlet we have seen through the play. But in any case I don't think it can be profitably discussed at all in such naive terms; and if Professor Hawkins thinks that 'poetic injustice mirrors the injustice of real life', then she is merely preferring another kind of 'simplistic prattle', a kind from which the Sunday-school element has been expunged. This is surely just a matter of wearing one's prattle with a difference.

La Trobe University A. L. FRENCH
Melbourne

HEAVEN LIES

The intensity of Wordsworth's feelings about death is undeniable (and unsurprising). However, Gerald Solomon's article (*E in C*, April, 1977), interesting though it is, demonstrates not so much 'Wordsworth's fabrication of confused ideas on the subject of death', as the author's own confusion, for his argument is based largely upon falsification and strained interpretation. His concept of criticism as a matter of 'using these clues' results inevitably in an undervaluation of the poet.

For instance nothing in 'We are Seven' suggests that the little girl wishes for 'the return of a happy situation'. The words of the child in that poem show an acceptance of the death of her brother and her sister. What she cannot accept is that their death means that they are no longer to be counted as part of the family. She cannot admit that she is, as Gerald Solomon puts it 'fantasying', simply because she is not doing so. It is, in fact, strikingly realistic both to accept death and to realize that the dead still affect the lives of the living. The poem, with the repeated questions of its speaker, demonstrates not the irrationality of the child but the rigid incomprehension of the adult.

This is also demonstrated in the 'Anecdote for Fathers'. Again the child in this poem is not longing, as Mr. Solomon says, for his former home; he merely expresses a preference, under repeated questioning, a questioning that springs from 'very idleness'; the words 'our pleasant home when spring began' are not the words of Edward but of his father. Wordsworth is not applauding the child's way of solving life's problems: what he has learnt from the child is not 'self-deception' as Mr. Solomon suggests but an understanding, through the splendidly random quality of the child's answer, of how the child is forced into a lie by the pressure of his parent's questioning. It is in that sense that the child is a teacher. In 1847, Wordsworth replaced the slightly confusing subtitle of the poem with an epigraph from Eusebius, which makes his meaning more clear: *'retine vim istam, falsa enim dicam, si coges'*, the reply of the Delphic oracle to those who try to force an answer. The father who narrates the poem is evidently in the place of the oracle's tiresome supplicant (the 'three times I asked' of the published version was originally 'five times').

As for 'It is a beauteous evening', this sonnet was written not as 'conscious autobiography dealing with Wordsworth's relationship with his daughter'. It is concerned with natural beauty, and the child's peculiar relationship with natural beauty when she or he is primarily absorbed in play. Nor was the sonnet written about an occasion when Wordsworth was taking leave of Annette and Caroline 'for ever'. In fact, he visited them whenever he was in France: in 1820, he stayed with his wife's sister and Henry Crabb Robinson, in lodgings in Paris evidently chosen for their nearness to Caroline and Annette and he saw them frequently during his stay there: and he visited them again in 1837. He gave Caroline an allowance of £30 a year from

1816 to 1834 when he gave her a lump sum of £400. This may not be an adequate fulfillment of a father's duties: my point is that Wordsworth in 1802 did not sever his relationship with Annette and their child.

As for the comment on Caroline in Abraham's bosom, this phrase should be read in context:

> Thy nature is not therefore less divine
> Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year
> And worshippst at the Temple's inner shrine
> God being with thee when we know it not.

Each of these four lines is concerned with the heavenly quality of childhood experience. Wordsworth is saying that 'heaven lies around us in our infancy'. Lying 'in Abraham's bosom' has not 'only one customary meaning, namely, *being dead*'. It has only one customary meaning, namely *being in heaven*. The damned, though dead, do not lie in Abraham's bosom. The phrase is perhaps remarkable, but Gerald Solomon's inaccurate paraphrase merely obscures Wordsworth's evident meaning.

Mr. Solomon's reading of *The Prelude* (II. 292 ff.) is also at fault, although I believe his reading is quite common. From the pen of one orphaned so early 'the props of my affection were removed' would seem to refer to the death of his parents. The context however shows that 'the props of his affection' are the childhood games and pastimes, the 'incidental charms', which brought him in close contact with natural objects: he found that when nutting and snaring woodcocks lost some of their charm, he could still love woods and hills.

It seems a pity when writing about Wordsworth's feelings about death to ignore his own acknowledgement of pain and confusion. After the death of his beloved brother John, he struggled intellectually and imaginatively with the concepts of death and immortality, as his letters show. Wordsworth concentrated all his mental powers on the subject of death: he did not escape into easy fantasy. It is a distortion of his poetic nature to ignore the intellectual struggle which lies behind his painfully qualified view of mortality and immortality:

> 'Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.'

University of Manitoba JUNE STURROCK

Literary Studies

The German *Novelle*
Martin Swales
The author explores the interrelation in the novelle of aesthetic theory and textual practice, suggesting that the characteristic mode of the novelle is a specific kind of narrative constellation advocated by theoreticians and practiced by writers. £11.20

Literary Uses of Typology from the Late Middle Ages to the Present
Edited by Earl Miner
These essays explore the principal uses of typology and figuralism in American and European literature and suggest the extent to which these literatures are indebted to Biblical aesthetics. £18.70

Rediscovering Hawthorne
Kenneth Dauber
Starting from Hawthorne's statement that his works are attempts to open an intercourse with the world, Dauber examines them to see how they serve as acts of communication and lays a foundation for a new theory of genres. £9.70

Thoreau and the American Indians
Robert F. Sayre
Thoreau turned toward Indians in his writing as well as in his life, and this book traces the long and arduous process by which his ideas about Indians evolved from savagist stereotypes to attitudes of greater originality. £10.80

The Fantastic in Literature
Eric S. Rabkin
Through a comparison of fairy tales, science fiction, detective stories, and religious allegory, Rabkin shows that the fantastic represents a mode of human knowing, one used to probe wishes and dreams and to reshape the world in which we live. £9.40

ESSAYS IN CRITICISM

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF LITERARY CRITICISM

Vol. XXVIII April 1978 No. 2

Langland's Literal Allegory

MAUREEN QUILLIGAN

IN his essay 'The Action of Langland's Second Vision' (*E in C*, XV, pp. 247–268), John Burrow describes the workings of a pattern of narrative which is of fundamental importance to the nature of allegory, both medieval and modern. Although Mr. Burrow himself concludes that this pattern is itself 'foreign' to allegory, his mistake should not obscure the significance of his description, which can be extended into a distinctive definition of the genre of narrative allegory. So far from being foreign to its nature, the reflexive tension in the *Piers Plowman* B-text between literalness and metaphor which Mr. Burrow outlines is the essence of the genre.

Mr. Burrow's main point is that Langland's literal narrative 'actions' characteristically 'dwindle' into metaphor. At first Langland appears to be presenting a clearly defined series of actions in passus V–VII, which, as they proceed, inscribe the traditional 'arc of penitential action'. First, there is a sermon, next, a confession, then a pilgrimage, and finally a pardon, the usual object of fourteenth-century pilgrimages. According to Mr. Burrow, Langland chose this 'well-constructed plot' to show the kind of unapocalyptic change in society the poem itself was designed to instigate—a 'conversion that can be expected of people, here, now, and in England', or a conversion not unlike the one the pilgrims in *The Canterbury Tales* are supposed to experience. Yet, according to Mr. Burrow, Langland does not fulfil the expectations built up by this plot; rather he frustrates the shape of the arc, and disrupts the series by providing instead of successive actions, a series of substitutions. For example, the pilgrimage, which in Reason's sermon was to seek St. Truth (or God), is at first '*anything* but an actual pilgrimage', which like the Canterbury pilgrims', would normally have sought the actual shrine of a particular saint. It is essentially unlike a pilgrimage to 'God', who has no local habitation on earth. But beyond this subtle translation of the notion of pilgrimage into something less actual and more metaphorical, the fictional pilgrimage is itself frustrated. Piers does not lead the folk on any trip; Langland dispenses with the journey in the briefest kind of landscape allegory (Piers only describes the route, which goes over stiles and rivers, and around bends named from the ten commandments); instead Piers tells all the folk to stay at home and help him plough his half-acre. The pilgrimage is never resumed, either literally or metaphorically, for the image of pardon interrupts the image of ploughing, which had itself interrupted the image of pilgrimage. Mr. Burrow explains the reason for the interruption by the pardon: 'St. Truth himself, the very object of the proposed pilgrimage, commands his servant to stay at home'. Yet, as Mr. Burrow notes, 'at the same time, the fact that Truth obtains a plenary pardon for Piers . . . suggests equally clearly that the pilgrimage is, in another sense, completed'. What has happened to the idea of a pilgrimage, then, is that it 'first becomes an allegorical form or "vehicle", then dwindles into a mere metaphor'.

Mr. Burrow suggests that Langland drops the pilgrimage as an allegorical 'vehicle' simply because he did not believe in pilgrimages as forms of penance sufficient for salvation. They were external forms which could be abused (by wives of Bath, for instance) and because penance must be internally felt in order to operate, Langland insists on the image of ploughing, an action not so available to misinterpretation and one that stresses the notion of keeping oneself 'at home'. By frustrating the narrative, Langland makes an important moral point.

The problem of the pardon is, however, more complicated. If Langland believed in the efficacy of pardons more than that of pilgrimages, why does Piers, in the most notorious crux of the poem, tear up the pardon for 'pure tene'? Mr. Burrow explains that in trusting the unorthodox message of his pardon, Piers is, at the same time, 'rejecting bulls with seals'. This action, like the action of the pilgrimage, 'contains a message which is by implication an attack upon itself'. Reason's sermon had described an 'unreal' or 'impossible' pilgrimage; so too, the actual words of the pardon which Piers tears up are not the usual terms of a regular papal bull; it is not a real pardon. Langland does not stop with this paradoxical implication, however, but provides yet another substitution, a reversion to the ploughing metaphor which is, however, itself translated. Piers says that he will substitute prayers and penance for his plough: 'Of prayers and of penaunce · my plow shal ben herafter' (VII. 119). It is almost as if Langland had become frustrated with each 'vehicle' in turn. In the same way that real pilgrimages and actual pardons can be subject to a too 'external' interpretation which belies the internal state necessary for the outward show to mean anything at all, Langland's metaphors can be abused. Thus, in tearing the pardon, Piers demonstrates against the 'form' of pardons, or the mere 'formality' which makes pardons spiritually meaningless. Langland is willing to sacrifice narrative coherence in order to make this point. According to Mr. Burrow, Langland is so morally bothered by the 'indeterminate degree of metaphor' in these literal actions that he allows 'interference' with the literal level of the poem. He agrees with Rosemary Woolf (*E in C*, XII, 1962) that a general 'lack of a sustained literal level' becomes among the 'chief non-medieval qualities of the poem'.

The basic process of allegory always involves the narrative in slippery switches of terms. Langland's practice in the *Visio* is only the most obvious form of allegory's tendency to slide tortuously back and forth between literal and metaphorical meanings of words, and therefore to make moral use of the problematic tensions between them. Thus, when Mr. Burrow goes on to conclude that Langland's characteristic lack of a 'sustained' literal level is not only *un*-medieval but *unallegorical* as well, I must disagree. The problem derives from the difficulties of the term 'literal' in a discussion of allegory. Its general use is to mean 'actual', 'life-like', or 'real', and this is the sense in which Mr. Burrow primarily uses the term. Yet, paradoxically, when he explains that there is no 'sustained literal level', he is actually saying that there is no continuous fictional activity or 'plot' which can provide the basis for a continued, coherent allegorical interpretation. He is saying that there is no sustained *metaphor*, or there is no sustained base-line of literal action upon which the reader can build a consistent (metaphorical) interpretation.

No doubt it would have been easier to coordinate Langland's narrative with our traditional understanding of allegory as a neat set of parallel one-for-one correspondences had he given us an extended pilgrimage which we could translate into allegorical meaning, or which would have been translated for us into meaning by the tags attached to the outcroppings of the imaginary landscape (as Bunyan provides for us, for instance). Yet when Langland disrupts the literal level by his series of substituted images he specifically undermines this simplistic notion of allegorical reading. He interrupts the literal level specifically to hinder the reader's fascination with the operation of translating metaphors into 'allegory'. In effect, he signals that he does not want the operation of reading to proceed as easy, external, translation. He frustrates the reader's expectations in order to ram home to him that his very desire to read of a pilgrimage (or to read a sustained literal level) is the same as any literal-minded penitent's desire to substitute a physical pilgrimage for the internal understanding which only makes the travel worthwhile. He disrupts the literal level to remind the reader that he is reading too literally—and here I mean the word 'literally' metaphorically.

The literal meaning of 'literal' is, in fact, not 'actual' or 'life-like', but 'letteral'—having to do with letters and with the reading of words (as in the sense of 'literate'). When a reader is reading the 'literal' level (in traditional parlance), he is actually reading the 'metaphorical' level—that is, he watches the imaginary action in his mind's eye: the landscape flies by, the pilgrimage goes on with its bustle of noise. The only thing that will return a reader from imagining such a distracting 'level' of action to thinking about the significance this action ought to hold for him, is to deny him the colourful journey. Thus Langland frustrates his reader's normal desires for more interesting extensions of the literal level of the narrative, or for more 'plot'. By doing so the poet paradoxically insists that the reader read not *less* literally, but *more* literally, for, if the reader can no longer follow an imaginary event in his mind's eye, he must look at the words on the page. If the text does not sustain a movie-like image of action, he will be reminded that what he is reading is a text. It will be all he has left to read, for the imagined action will have disappeared. At that point Langland, like all allegorists (from Alain de Lille to Hawthorne), has got the reader doing what he wants him to do—looking carefully at those words, and the letters he uses to spell them, written out, on the page.

What, then, does Langland wish his reader to take away from the pardon scene? The function of the priest with whom Piers has his bitter argument, ended only by his tearing the pardon, is to impress upon the reader the vital problem of interpretation. As Hawthorne's focus in the *Scarlet Letter* is the problem of interpreting the letter 'A' (which word—adultress, angel, able, art—does it stand for?), so Langland's focus in *Piers Plowman* is, for the same generic reason, the problem of interpreting the pardon. The priest offers to 'gloss' the pardon 'on Englisshe'—that is, to translate the latin words and to interpret them as words in an esoteric text. His conclusion from this 'glossing' is that the pardon is not an actual pardon because the words do not take the orthodox form. Mary Carruthers points out that this priest is an example of blatant literal-mindedness; he rejects the pardon because it doesn't read like ones he has seen before. 'When he cannot discover the word "pardon" in the Latin statement, he says that it is no pardon at all.' Thus he is bounded by the 'literal statement of the words'.[1] Yet, in a very fundamental sense, the priest's problem is not that he reads too literally, but that he does not read *literally* enough; he does not read the actual words of the pardon, nor think about what they mean, literally. Piers, however, understands that the pardon says simply 'do well', and his actions reveal that he takes these words in their most literal sense. The pardon does not say do any specific, 'literal' action. Piers is the only one to read the pardon literally for he remembers that 'do well' is an imperative verb with no immediate object; he says, therefore, that he is going to do well—he will cease ploughing and will make of his plough prayers and penance. He is not going to plough any longer, because it is not a sufficient outward sign of the spiritual understanding commanded by the pardon.

When Mary Carruthers explains that Piers 'sees the literal words as signs of a spiritual meaning, hidden within them, which can only be understood in relationship to the whole divine pattern', she wrongly assumes that Piers reads the pardon 'allegorically'. Langland, however, has taken great care to show that unlike anyone else, Piers reads *literally*; his 'pure tene' is a response to the fact that the words of Truth's pardon are not what he had expected. They are not, in fact, a pardon, for the text enjoins reward for good deeds and punishment for bad, or states the law one needs to be pardoned from. Yet the next text Piers quotes, the twenty-third Psalm, at least states the faith that man can be pardoned. In a few lines, Langland has condensed the central paradox of Christianity; to sum it up as the enduring conflict between Works and Faith is to simplify the paradox Langland spends much of the poem in developing; the conflict between the Law of Love and the Law of Justice *is* the crux of the pardon scene; and the 'breakdown' of the literal action is designed to make the reader become involved in the paradox. At the very least, the reader learns that the interpretation of the pardon is a puzzle.[2]

Will's response to the pardon provides a specific foil to Piers's reading of it. Unlike Piers, Will reads the pardon literally, in the bad sense, for he transforms the terms of the pardon away from their literal, grammatical forms. 'Do well' in the pardon is a verb, yet Will's next action is to begin searching for a fully personified character named 'Do well'. By transforming the verb into a noun, and by personifying that noun, Will has involved himself in the same abuse of language Lady Meed represents simply by being the personification of a word that happens also to be a pun ('meed' may mean either bribery or reward).[3] This is the normal process of allegory which operates most obviously by personifying nouns. Yet, just as there is a good punning, such as the sort of wordplay Holy Church uses, so there is a good literalness as well as a bad literal-mindedness. Will's literal-mindedness is bad at this point. He still prefers to treat the words of the pardon as concrete objects—as people; they become more than mere signs for some sort of specific, literal action he might perform, and by performing earn salvation. They become ends in themselves. Mrs. Carruthers concludes a similar argument about Will's response to the pardon scene by saying:

> Will has not yet realized that the problem of doing well is related to the problem of interpretation. . . . The problem of *intus legendum,* or inward reading is as pertinent to works as it is to words, for true works express an inner, spiritual meaning just as true words do. Thus the formulation which Will employs is a false one: it treats words and works as things in and of themselves, which can be judged absolutely on a moral scale, rather than understanding both as signs of a spiritual reality. And by casting the problem in terms of an irreconcilable conflict between words and works, Will demonstrates that he is just as wedded to a purely literal understanding as the priest is. He must understand, as Piers does, the true nature of words and works as signs, informed by the spiritual essence of kynde; they are not circumscribed, earthly things, but signs of the 'inner word', the understanding, and the will 'that shines within'.[4]

The important point that this otherwise remarkable reading brushes over is that Piers's spiritual understanding is 'spiritual' only is so far as it is *literal*—in the good and literal sense of that term. Will reifies language and in turning 'do well' into a thing, he translates the term into metaphor; Piers does not. He allows the words their own proper meaning. Truly spiritual reading of allegory is paradoxically the most *literal* kind of reading.

Out of Will's literal-mindedness, however, Langland generates the next section of the poem, which develops in the most literal way possible, as a wrong-headed commentary on the text of the pardon. The relationship between the *Vita* and the *Visio* thus takes shape as the familiar connection between text and commentary. When Langland organizes Will's search in terms of an obsessive splitting of the verb 'do well' into other nouns, ranked furthermore in the degrees of adverbs—Dowell, Dobet, Dobest—he reveals the basic verbal nature of the problem which is at the heart of the last section of the poem. That his is the wrong kind of search, the wrong kind of interpretation, is part of Langland's point. Were is to be the right kind, the poem would end.

A major section of the *Vita* is designed to show that Will's interpretation of the words 'do well' is simply a manifestation of a much larger spiritual problem—a pervasive abuse of language which, in the process of trying to correct, allegory appears to 'unmake' itself. As a final example of Langland's frustrating refusal to supply continuous 'literal' action, John Burrow takes the dropping of another 'allegory' in the Dobet section—the allegory of Christ's 'jousting' in Jerusalem. Although, as Mr. Burrow point out, Langland makes elaborate preparations for this joust throughout three whole passus, when the reader finally arrives in Jerusalem fully expecting to be treated to the joust, he finds that it never happens. Again, Langland has simply 'dropped' the allegory, which again 'dwindles' into metaphor. Mr. Burrow takes Langland to task for capriciously dropping so promising an action: 'Langland could easily have sustained this allegory, as other medieval writers . . . had done before him'. Unlike his use of the allegorical actions of pilgrimage and pardon, Langland drops the allegory of the joust with no redeeming process of substitution; this is the kind of movement which Mr. Burrow finds 'foreign to the nature of allegory itself'. He reasons that

> An allegorical story is, in one very simple way, unlike a metaphor. A metaphor, however long it may be sustained, has no exclusive rights: the author is always free to dispense with it whenever he feels that his 'real' subject would be better served that way. An allegorical story, on the other hand, has itself a kind of 'reality'—the reality of the literal level—and for that reason, the author, however much he may digress and delay, cannot simply dispense with it.

Yet dispense with the jousting story is what Langland apparently does. Mr. Burrow concludes that by 'allowing intended meanings to interfere with . . . his chosen action' Langland simply violates the reader's expectation. 'The discarded parts of his allegory return to haunt him in the shape of metaphors', with the result that his literal level becomes 'hopelessly confused'. But confusion at the 'literal' level may not be a bad thing. Langland obviously did not assume it was, for he carefully orchestrates the narrative action of the joust in Jerusalem to frustrate not only the 'literal' level but the insufficiently *literal* kind of reading based upon it. With it he makes exactly the same point he had already made with his easy dispensations of the pilgrimage and pardon; with it he may be said to make the point of his poem, and to reveal as well a generically fundamental technique of narrative allegory.

Langland's careful artistry in this structural sleight-of-hand is neat but extensive; Langland uses three whole passus to force the transition from a metaphorical reading of a 'literal' level to a very word-conscious *literal* reading of the poem's *text*. This transition is the major purpose of the three passus, and the sheer amount of verse Langland devotes to the action of the joust indicates the importance of the theological point Langland hopes to make with it.

Significantly, the allegory of the joust is introduced by a pun. In passus XVI, after the image of the Tree of Charity has culminated in the disarray of Piers hitting at the Satanic 'raggman' who has stolen his fruit, Gabriel's voice breaks into the narrative to prophesy the coming of Christ:

> That one Ihesus, a *iustice* sonne · most iouke in her
> chambre
> Tyl *plenitudo temporis* · fully comen were,
> That Pieres fruit floured · and fel to be ripe.
> And thanne shulde Ihesus *iuste* there-fore · bi iuggement
> of armes,
> Whether shulde fonge the fruit · the fende or hymselue.
> (XVI, 92–96; Skeat's 1869 ed.,
> repr. EETS, 1964; my italics)

The pun is on the medieval term *just*, which here means both jousting and justice.[5] Langland collapses the two terms through wordplay, implying that to joust is to do justice: a Son of Justice will joust with the devil to retrieve the stolen fruit of mankind. No mere bit of alliterative wit, this pun poses a serious question about the nature of Christian justice, which the whole jousting allegory devotes itself to answering. Gabriel's prophecy furthermore looks forward to the dramatic Harrowing of Hell in passus XVIII; it therefore anticipates the 'end' of the action, and the story of the 'joust' takes shape as the coherent narrative unit of Christ's life. As if to emphasize this fact, Langland gives a brief summary of that life stressing one particular incident, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead: 'Iewes iangled there-ageyne · iugged laws, / And seide he wroughte thorw wicchecrafte' (XVI. 119–120). By referring to this incident, Langland alerts his reader to the central problem Jesus faced with the Pharisees—their literal-minded interpretation of the law, and consequent refusal to see his resurrection of its dead literalness into life—and also to the central problem he faces in writing of Christ's life in terms of the jousting allegory—the reader's literal-minded fascination with the details of the joust at the expense of what Christ's life means. Langland concludes this brief history with an account of Jesus's jousting on Good Friday:

> thus was he taken
> thorw iudas and iewes · ihesus was his name;
> that on the fryday folwynge · for mankynde sake
> *Iusted* in ierusalem · a ioye to vs alle.
> (XVI, 160–163; my italics)

After this vision, Will awakes from his dream-within-a-dream to meet Abraham (or Faith) described as an 'heraud of armes', who seeks a 'ful bolde bachelere', identified by a 'blasen' (179) which pictures the trinity. In this way the jousting terminology carries over into the next dream. While Abraham and Will walk toward Jerusalem, Will wonders with some surprise: 'what is in yowre lappe?'. With allegory's penchant for literalizing clichés, Langland imagines Abraham walking with his lap full of those who were traditionally supposed to be 'in the bosom of

Abraham'. This impossible image is not meant to be visualized (no one could walk with a hell-full of people); however it is to be remembered, for it is another signal of the 'end' to the event and helps to keep the final shape of the narrative unit in the reader's mind. As he journeys to Jerusalem, Abraham looks forward to Christ's harrowing of Hell, which will free him from the burden he faithfully carries for God.

Will and Faith soon encounter Hope, a 'spye' who inquires 'after a knighte' and who carries a tablet given to him 'vpon the mounte of synay'; it contains, however, not the ten commandments, but the two—to love God and one's neighbour (XVII. 11). This substitution, a bit like the kinds of substitutions Langland has given us in the *Visio*, bothers Will. A conservative, Will thinks the old laws are good enough, or that, at the very least, the new laws are too brief. He and Hope argue about the matter at length, nor is their disagreement resolved until the Good Samaritan appears, riding 'ful rapely . . . to a iustes in iherusalem' (XVII. 49–51). He settles the argument by action; he stops to help a man whom Abraham and Hope have passed by. As Will watches, he finally sees the need for the *lex Christi* which appears in the form of a farm-house where the Good Samaritan takes the wounded man, telling the hostler 'kepe this man · til I come from the iustes' (XVII. 74).

This series of encounters not only creates a dramatic sense of the rush to judgment in Jerusalem, but also unfolds the complicated relationship between the Old and the New Laws. Critics who talk about the extensive pattern of punning on justice and jousting throughout these passus remark only the metaphor of the joust; they neglect the other part of the pun—justice—which provides the very concept which is continually redefined through Will's encounters with Faith, Hope, and Charity. Each of these three travellers has his own conception of sufficient 'law' and Faith and Hope try to help Will to understand the relationship between them:

> What neded it thanne · a new lawe to bigynne,
> Sith the fyrst sufficeth · to sauacioun & to blisse?
> (XVII. 30–31)

Faith's law (a belief in the trinity) is, according to Will, easier to obey; Will remarks with some irony to Hope 'Tho that lerneth thi lawe · wil litel while vsen it!' (XVII. 46). Not only the action of the narrative, but such conversations as these, continually focus on the problem of law, and of justice.

At the opening of passus XVIII, Will falls asleep to find himself in Jerusalem in the midst of joyous tumult at the approaching joust. 'One semblable to the samaritan' arrives, looking lively, like a knight who comes to be dubbed and win gilt spurs. Will sees Faith again, who cries from a window a most significant welcome to the samaritan (whom we now recognize as Jesus) 'A! fili dauid! / As doth an Heraude of armes · whan auntrous [adventurous knights] cometh to iustes'. And, Langland tells us, specificially the 'old iewes of ierusalem · for ioye thei songen' (XVIII, 15–17). Abraham explains to Will that Jesus will 'iuste in piers armes . . . / In Piers paltok the plowman · this pricker shal ryde' (XVIII. 22–25). In answer to Will's odd question, 'Who shal iuste with ihesus? iuwes or scribes?' Abraham answers, 'Nay'—Jesus will joust with 'the foule fende · and fals dome & deth' (XVIII. 28). Yet Will's apparently stupid remark about the Jewish scribes is not so wide of the mark: the joust finally turns out to be not a joust at all but a trial. Just at the moment when any reader expects to be treated to the climactic jousting scene, Langland states instead

> Thanne cam *pilatus* with moche peple · *sedens pro tribunali,*
> To see how doughtilich deth sholde do · & deme her botheres righte
> *The iuwes and the iustice · ageine ihesu thei were,*
> And al her courte on hym cryde · *crucifige* sharpe.
>
> (XVIII. 36–39; my italics)

Here is the point at which, according to Mr. Burrow, Langland allows the 'literal' level to collapse into allegorical chaos, the biblical story of Christ's trial 'interfering' with the action of the joust. Langland has indeed frustrated the reader's expectation but he does so to a purpose. He forces him to abandon the 'literal' story of the joust so as to make him more sensitive to the true *literalness* of words. All Langland has done, in switching from joust to trial, is to return to the other term of the pun: justice. A trial is the *aptest* demonstration of the process of justice, and this biblical trial in particular is the unique, historic one which prepared for the total reorganization of divine law, or that redefinition of Old Testament justice which it was Christ's office to achieve, and toward which the allegory of the joust has always been pointing. (As if to underscore this point, Langland makes the main 'evidence' for Jesus's witchcraft quoted at the trial, his statement about tearing down and rebuilding the Temple in three days—an action which was not meant to be understood physically.) To dispense with the image of the joust is not, therefore, to drop the allegory, but to deepen it and to make it more immediately available to the audience who, while they may never have gone on pilgrimage, or obtained a pardon (or seen a joust), would surely have participated in the Good Friday liturgy, from which Langland takes the trial. The metaphorical shift from joust to trial then makes the theme of justice more immediate and more explicit. And again, the reality of the literal level, far from being violated by the shift in terms, itself decrees the legitimacy of such a switch. The most literal aspect of the literal level of the joust—the word 'just' itself—provides the image of a trial.

This sudden modulation is also Langland's paradoxical statement about the literalness of his allegory. In a sense, any reader who is disappointed by the trial scene must be faulted for the same Pharisaic literalness of interpretation as the Jews. The Jews and their Old Testament legality are arrayed against Jesus at the trial. Will was right: Jesus does indeed joust with scribes, and specifically with the Pharisaical attitude toward the literalness of the law. Abraham's correction of Will—that Jesus will joust with 'fals dome' and 'deth'—is only another way of saying the same thing, for Jesus does joust with false judgment, and with the kind of death a Pharisaic literalism brings—for, as we know, the letter killeth and the spirit giveth life.

Langland had carefully prepared for this point when he stipulated that it is only Abraham and the 'old iuwes of ierusalem' who rejoice at the sight of the knight Jesus.

Langland's refusal to present Jesus as a warring knight in armour, as he seems to promise, and his substitution of Jesus's suffering at the trial for a triumphant joust, simply underscores the fact that Christ's mission was not to be a messianic leader of an army, but a sacrifice to fulfil, and to supersede the Old Law. Langland's transition from literal story of the joust, mediated by the switch from one meaning of the pun on 'just' to the other, forces the reader to realize again the paradoxical quality of Christian heroism which triumphs by being defeated. And Langland forces the reader to recognize this by disrupting the reader's own Pharisaic fascination with all the panoply of a medieval joust.

As social institutions in Langland's time, jousts were more archaic entertainments than the mock battles in preparation for war of the earlier middle ages, but they did retain their legal nature, in which God was assumed to give victory to the 'right' side of the duel. The lists at Coventry, scheduled for 16 September 1397 between Hereford and Norfolk, so honoured in the breach by Richard II, were not fabricated by Shakespeare; battle was a customary way of trying such matters at the time.[6] Yet, as one of those once-again fashionable, formulaic entertainments, which were enjoying at the time a brief vogue among the bourgeoisie,[7] a joust would have promised an even more romantic diversion to Langland's reader than a pilgrimage; to disrupt a story built on such an inherently escapist 'plot' would have been, no doubt, to risk even greater frustration in the reader than the simple evaporation of a pilgrimage. Of course, the greater intensity of the reader's disappointment is part of the point, and it would help to make the substitution of trial for joust even more forceful than the substitution of pardon for pilgrimage, especially with the direct reference of the trial to the actual historical details of Christ's life. The substitution is at once more jarring (because joust and trial are superficially farther apart than pilgrimage and pardon—which are both 'religious'), and also more *literally* appropriate because of the strict connection between the two in the pun on 'just'.

The return of the jousting terminology continues to make the same point about the reader's need to read *literally*, and

Christ's translation of the problem of literalism into a new context. The Jews make Longinus, the blind chevalier, take 'the spere in his honde · & iusten with ihesus'; when the spear pierces Christ's side, however, Langland explains that 'the blode sprong down by the spere · & vnspered [opened] the knightes eyen. / Thanne fel the knighte vpon knees · and cryed hym mercy' (XVIII. 86–87). The reader ought by now to be sensitive to the theological dimensions of the pun on the word 'spere'. Jesus's blood changes the blind notion of jousting justice to mercy; he opens Longinus's eyes. The pun on 'spere' shows by its own shift in meaning exactly what it is Christ has done; he has taken the instrument of death (a spear) and opened (unspered) men's eyes.

The episodes which immediately follow this 'joust'—the debate between the four daughters of God and the Harrowing of Hell—conclude the section of Dobet by continuing to consider the problem of justice and to extend the jousting allegory. The Harrowing of Hell has been called the real joust between Christ and Satan, yet it too is more a legalistic debate than a joust. The argument between Truth, Mercy, Righteousness, and Peace concerns whether or not Christ can rightfully overturn God's first law for man; it re-enacts the argument Will, Abraham, and Hope have about the two new commandments. Truth tells Mercy that her story about the undoing of death is 'but a tale of waltrot' (XVIII. 142). In the same way, Righteousness rebukes Peace for rejoicing that 'ihesus iusted well', because the 'dome' of God himself, decreeing death for man, cannot be undone.

The devils take up this same legalistic question when they defend their hegemony over the dead souls 'by right' (XVIII. 282), and, as Jesus himself explains, he releases the souls held in Hell only by fulfilling that Old Law:

> *Ergo*, soul shal soule quyt · & synne to synne wende,
> And al that man hath mysdo · I, man, wyl amende.
> Membre for membre · bi the olde lawe was amendes,
> And lyf for lyf also · & by that lawe I clayme it.
> . . .
> So leue it nougte, lucifer · ageine the law I fecche hem,
> But bi right & by resoun · raunceoun here my lyges.
> (XVIII, 338–347)

Morton Bloomfield has argued that Langland's decision to make the Harrowing of Hell rather than the Passion of Christ the climax of Dobet grew out of a need to reconcile love and charity with justice and reason: 'Christ's death is an act of love and an act of justice; but until the just are freed in hell and Satan bound and confined, His sacrifice is not complete'.[8] Langland completes the sacrifice with the continued narrative of the Harrowing of Hell, and, furthermore, completes the jousting allegory which had always looked forward to Christ's release of those souls suffering bondage in hell, in Abraham's 'lappe'. Far from being a characteristic example of Langland's structural caprices, or the untidiness of his allegory, the story of the joust carefully and neatly unfolds the intricate relationships between the Old Law and the New, and points toward this last act of justice, when the New Law supersedes the Old, and brings in a necessary new way of interpreting the law.

Langland's theme in Dobet is the redemption of justice and of man. Yet, through the subtle manipulations of the jousting allegory and its insistence on the literalness of words, he seems to redeem language as well. Because of the polysemousness of such terms as 'just' and 'spere', Langland can legitimately switch the whole metaphoric basis of the narrative. The pun on 'just' itself makes the point about old definitions of justice—it is, in a sense, mere jousting, death for death, and therefore insufficient. The action of the narrative switches from the activity of jousting to the business of the Christian sacrifice executed by the biblical trial *at the exact moment* that sensitivity to the spiritual wisdom which transforms the letter of the law must be substituted for a facile reading of the 'literal' action. There is a clash between form and content initially: but after the reader understands the reason for his frustration, he perceives the true sense there is to the letter. Jewish justice is just jousting. Christ's kind is something other.

By managing to make so large a point (it is after all the basic outline of Christian history) with a word, Langland seems to assume the nearly sacred power of the polysemousness of words. Puns can be dangerous, as in Lady Meed's abuse of language; but puns can also provide the rationale for a subtly exfoliating pattern which extends over an immense stretch of narrative; the pun on 'just' helps, in fact, to correct the reader's tendency to misread. Language has definitely redeemed itself, or, as Langland himself might have said, Christ, who was the Word of God, has redeemed man's language and, therefore, the language of the poem.

Yale University

NOTES

[1] Mary Carruthers, *The Search for St. Truth* (Evanston, Illinois, 1973), p. 77.

[2] For a discussion of the aenigmatic pardon as true pardon see Elizabeth Kirk, *The Dream-thought of Piers Plowman* (New Haven, 1972), pp. 84–85. Her larger point is that the 'dramatic' and confusing impact of the scene on the reader 'is absolutely essential to the whole strategy of the poem'.

[3] For a discussion of the problematic wordplay at the heart of the Meed episode see Carruthers, pp. 46ff.

[4] Carruthers, p. 80.

[5] For the initial discussion of this pun, see Bernard Huppé, '*Petrus, Id est Christus:* Wordplay in *Piers Plowman*, B-Text', *ELH*, 17 (1950), pp. 163–90.

[6] Cf. May McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century, 1307–1399* (Oxford, 1939), p. 487.

[7] Cf. R. S. Loomis, 'Arthurian Influence on Sport and Spectacles', in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. R. S. Loomis (Oxford, 1959), p. 556.

[8] Morton Bloomfield, *Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth-Century Apocalypse* (New Brunswick, 1961), p. 130.

Macbeth and the Terrors of the Night

ANN PASTERNAK SLATER

THERE are two opposing attitudes to the study of sources. At one extreme, there is the romantic idea that a writer's work springs from his own experience. So Kipling's Shakespeare drunkenly confesses to Ben Jonson

> How at Bankside, a boy drowning kittens
> Winced at the business; whereupon his sister—
> Lady Macbeth aged seven—thrust 'em under,
> Sombrely scornful.
> ('The Craftsman')

At the other extreme is the scholar's urge to see his author as dedicated to research as he is himself. Professor Bullough clearly subscribes to the latter approach: 'Of course Shakespeare could have invented everything, but he never liked to do that, preferring always to remake suitable existing material'.[1] In the case of *Macbeth*, this decoys Bullough into compiling a staggering reading-list for Shakespeare to get through while in training for the play. Apart from the inevitable Holinshed, it would include such diverse works as Marston's *Sophonisba*, Daniel's *Arcadia Reformed*, Henry Howard's *A Defensative against the Poyson of supposed Prophecies*, the *Scotorum Historiae* of Hector Boethius (available only in Latin or Scottish), George Buchanan's *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* and John Leslie's *De Origine Scotorum* (both available only in Latin), and, 'with the intention of writing a more classical play than his previous tragedies', a stiff course in Seneca, including the *Medea, Agamemnon, Phaedra, Hercules Furens* and *Hercules Oetaeus*.[2] The list would seem to be absurd. When writers speak for themselves, they often prefer to be thought of as a natural, not a swot. Yeats has small sympathy for the 'Bald heads forgetful of their sins' who

> Edit and annotate the lines
> That young men, tossing on their beds,
> Rhymed out in love's despair
> To flatter beauty's ignorant ear . . .
> ('The Scholars')

Nashe hastily disassociates himself from these harmless drudges:

> those that will harken any more after Dreames, I referre them to Artemidorus, Synesius, & Cardan, with many others which onely I haue heard by their names, but I thanke God had neuer the plodding patience to reade, for if they bee no better than some of them I haue perused, euery weatherwise old wife might write better.
>
> (361. 23–8)[3]

Berowne may well be speaking for his author in his attack on life-denying scholarship at the beginning of *Love's Labour's Lost*. His sympathies at least lie with Nashe and Yeats:

> Study is like the heaven's glorious sun,
> That will not be deep-search'd with saucy looks;
> Small have continual plodders ever won,
> Save base authority from others' books.
>
> (*L.L.L.* I. i. 84 ff.)

Yet each is contradicted by his own example. What enormous bibliography must lie behind *A Vision*, and what monstrous pedantry behind Yeats's edition of Blake? Nashe's light-hearted polymath erudition is a match for McKerrow. Shakespeare's primary sources alone make an impressive array.

Two things should be stressed. The first is the random nature of an author's reading. He will pick up whatever is of interest to him from the most diverse sources, without (like Johnson) necessarily reading a book *through*. The scholar in breathless pursuit has no such freedom. Livingston Lowes gives an amusing account of himself plodding grimly through eight hundred and six pages of Priestley's *Opticks*, 'still nursing the unconquerable hope that a jewel might turn up in the dust heap', before finding a reference Coleridge had used, on the very last page of the text.[4] Coleridge, as he says, had read the *Opticks*—at least the eight hundred and seventh page. But, of course, an author is likely to glance at books relevant to his own interests, and no doubt Shakespeare did some research, no matter how summary, into superstition and witchcraft for *Macbeth*, just as he obviously read the historical background with care and, indeed, showed minute skill in his dovetailing of details from the story of Donwald with that of Macbeth. The second point is that a writer would appear to prefer reading what is both interesting in itself and well-written. Nashe is engagingly candid about the text-books he couldn't bear to open. One of the most striking general impressions given by Professor Bullough's monumental work on Shakespeare's sources is how fresh and well-written all the primary sources are, without exception. Two hitherto unnoticed sources for *Macbeth*, Nashe's *The Terrors of the Night* (1594) and Lewes Lavater's *Of Ghostes and Spirites, Walking by Night*, translated into English in 1596, both pass muster on either count. Lavater is simple, unadorned, and easy to read; his anecdotes, while commonplaces in books on witchcraft, are more vividly and simply told than in the traditional editorial hunting-grounds of Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1572), or de Loyer's *A Treatise of Specters* (1605). Furthermore, his full summary and descriptive chapter headings make him easy to consult, as Shakespeare seems to have done, on the two topics that particularly concerned him—the delusions of the guilty, and the equivocation of the Devil. Links between Lavater and *Macbeth* are highly localised. The same is true to an even greater degree of Nashe's *Terrors of the Night*, which McKerrow summarily dismissed, saying: 'The book seems to have attracted little attention, and there are remarkably few references to it in the literature of the time', while Professor Muir's Arden edition follows H. H. Furness, Jr., in quoting only three minor parallels, all of which are insignificant commonplaces of daemonlogy.[5] The reader is immediately attracted by Nashe's exuberant, untrammelled style, his men 'that had good big pop mouths' and 'great glaring eyes that had whole shelues of Kentish oysters in them', his tired pen that 'makes blots as broad as a furd stomacher' (379. 3–4; 20–1; 384. 8). A dip into Nashe yields immediate returns, but, unlike Lavater, he is utterly chaotic and revels in it, limberly picking himself up from one foundered digression after another ('Now to visions and apparitions again, as fast as I can trudge . . .'). Reading Nashe 'through' simply deforms delight into impatience. At one point only does he hold his own interest, and consequently ours, and that is in his digression on dreams and the psychological sources of supernatural phenomena. All bar two of the links I have found with *Macbeth* come from this passage, and it falls within a mere ten pages (signatures B4v–Dv).[6]

There are four verbal parallels. Nashe writes of the spirits of the air:

> Politique statesmen they priuily incite to bleare the worlds eyes with clowdes of common wealth pretences, to broach any enmitie or ambitious humor of their owne vnder a title of their cuntries preseruation. To make it faire or fowle when they list to procure popularity or induce a preamble to some mightie peece of prowling. . . .
> (353. 14–9)

About to begin a mighty piece of prowling, Shakespeare's two-faced protagonists propose just this principle: 'mock the time with fairest show: / False face must hide what the false heart doth know' (I. vii. 81–2). It is, of course, the play's chief *leit-motiv,* chanted in the opening scene 'To the self-same tune and words'—'Fair is foul, and foul is fair' (I. i. 11, I. iii. 88), and echoed in many subtle variations thereafter. Nor was this now familiar alliterating antithesis such a commonplace at the time. Tilley quotes only three exact pre-Shakespearean instance of 'Fair face foul heart'. while the closer 'Fair without but foul within' occurs in only one pre-Shakespearean example, the rest lagging after 1616.[7] Earlier, Nashe comments on the spirits of the earth: 'Witches haue manie of these spirits, and kill kyne with them'; Shakespeare has:

First Witch Where hast thou been, sister?
Second Witch Killing swine. (I. iii. 1–2)

Then there's Nashe's fantasy of a world 'lousie with familiars':

> Infinite millions of them wil hang swarming about a worm-eaten nose. . . . Vpon a haire they will sit like a nit, and ouer-dredge a bald pate like a white scurffe. . . If the bubbels in streames were wel searcht, I am perswaded they would be found to be little better.
> (349. 21–2, 25–6; 350. 21–2)

The last sentence finds a distinct echo in Banquo's exclamation as the witches vanish: 'The earth hath bubbles, as the water has, / And these are of them' (I. iii. 79–80). Finally, Nashe begins his digression on hallucination by a scientific explanation:

> from the fuming melancholly of our spleene mounteth that hot matter into the higher Region of the braine, whereof manie fearfull visions are framed. (354. 15–8)

The unnerved Macbeth tries to be equally analytic about his hallucinatory dagger:

> Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
> To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
> A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
> Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
> (II. i. 36–9)[8]

Such echoes could of course be fortuitous, but they are supported by more dissipated and absorbing concurrences of content. Several of Nashe's general propositions can be seen in expanded and theatrically embodied form in Shakespeare's play. Most interesting, and most pervasive, is the ambivalent attitude both authors share towards daemonology. They exploit its lurid potential, yet give the paranormal credibiliy by their sceptical, psychological approach. However, McKerrow is clearly right to say that 'works on daemonology, witchcraft and related subjects borrow so largely from one another that it is a matter of considerable difficulty to discover from what source a particular thing is taken' (IV. 197). The Shakespearean critic can perhaps share the same uncertainty about the supernatural parts of *Macbeth* that McKerrow feels for the originals of Nashe's necromantic *pot pourri*. Holinshed is clearly the authority for the three witches with their first prophecies to Banquo and Macbeth; he is also the source for the supernatural warnings against Macduff, Macbeth's illusory voice proclaiming his guilt (an anecdote better presented in Buchanan's *Rerum Scoticarum Historia*), and the two deceptive prophecies about Birnam wood and Macbeth's immunity to man born of woman. But there is *no definite source* for the banquet scene and Banquo's ghost,[9] the hallucinatory dagger, the sleepwalking scene and the Porter's scene. The bare essentials of the supernatural may have been provided by Holinshed, but their psychological periphery would appear to be Shakespeare's own. Many of Shakespeare's details of daemonological lore have been attributed to his loyal consultation of King James's *Daemonologie* (1597, 1603).[10] It is hard to believe that Shakespeare needed to read this cruel and credulous pamphlet to learn such commonplaces as witches sailing in sieves, shipwrecking sailors, brewing noisome pottages, or dancing in a ring. Even if he did consult the King's punitive work, his curiosity would surely have prompted him to look into other books on witchcraft whose attitude was more enlightened, humane, and closer to his own—like Nashe's.

Although one cannot take any single character's utterances as an indication of Shakespeare's own attitude, the idea that guilt and fear create their own hobgoblins emerges from the canon with remarkable consistency. In fact, Shakespeare does first suggest this in his own voice:

> Look, how the world's poor people are amaz'd
> At apparitions, signs, and prodigies,
> Whereupon with fearful eyes they long have gaz'd,
> Infusing them with dreadful prophecies. . . .
> (*Venus and Adonis*, 925–6)

Theseus offers a more mundane variant:

> Or in the night, imagining some fear,
> How easy is a bush suppos'd a bear!
> (*M.S.N.D.*, V. i. 21–2)

Falstaff, pinched and mocked by Sir Hugh's schoolchildren, finds that guilt fosters gullibility:

> And these are not fairies? I was three or four times in the thought they were not fairies; and yet the guiltiness of my mind . . . drove the grossness of the foppery into a received belief. . . . (*M.W.*, V. v. 130ff.)

Julius Caesar, like *Macbeth* much concerned with the ambiguity of phenomena, proclaims the theme in the storm preceding the assassination. For Casca, the thunder, lightning, and accompanying prodigies are plainly portentous. Cicero voices the recurrent Shakespearean rationalism:

> Indeed, it is a strange-disposed time:
> But men may construe things after their fashion,
> Clean from the purpose of the things themselves.
> (*J.C.*, I. iii. 33–5)

This, the play's key proposition, is proved true immediately after, as Cassius enters—to twit Casca for his cowardice, and interpret the storm as a heavenly sign that Caesar should be killed. He *infuses* the apparitions with dreadful prophecies, construing Caesar as a prodigy:

> . . . why, you shall find
> That heaven hath infus'd them with these spirits
> To make them instruments of fear and warning
> Unto some monstrous state.
> Now could I, Casca, name to thee a man
> Most like this dreadful night . . .
> A man no mightier than thyself or me
> In personal action, yet prodigious grown.
> (*J.C.*, I. iii. 68ff.)

Finally, there are Troilus's last lines, still on the same theme:

> I'll haunt thee like a wicked conscience still,
> That mouldeth goblins swift as frenzy's thoughts.
> (*T. & C.*, V. x. 28–9)

In Nashe, Shakespeare would have found the elaboration and extension of an attitude that was in harmony with the one expressed in his own work for many years. Since he used Samuel Harsnett's savagely cynical attack on possession by spirits and exorcism, *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*, in *King Lear*, it certainly should not surprise us if King James's superstition was balanced by reminiscences of a work whose realistic moderation and psychological bias was more congenial to him.

Nashe opens *The Terrors of the Night* by characterizing his subject as the devil's time, the time of guilt:

> The rest we take in our beds is such another kinde of rest as the wearie traueller taketh in the coole soft grasse in summer, who thinking there to lye at ease . . . layeth his fainting head vnawares on a loathsome neast of snakes. (345. 26–30)

The image of the snake in the grass is part of Lady Macbeth's plot for her victim: 'look like the innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't' (I. v. 66–7). But the uneasy sleep it illustrates in Nashe is actually experienced by Macbeth and his wife. Moreover, while exploring the reasons for their nightmares, Macbeth uses the snake image for the cause of their unease—Banquo and Fleance:

> We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it:
> She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor malice
> Remains in danger of her former tooth.
> But let the frame of things disjoint . . .
> Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
> In the affliction of these terrible dreams
> That shake us nightly. (III. ii. 13ff.)

And again—'O! full of scorpions is my mind . . .' (III. ii. 36).

Nashe knows that the first cause of all night terrors is psychological, and employs 'melancholy' as a convenient blanket term. His conclusion is briskly rational: 'When all is said, melancholy is the mother of dreames, and of all terrours of the night whatsoeuer' (357. 17–19). This is the sound basis for his most interesting digression on the origin of dreams, hallucinations, and other disturbances of the senses, of which the first sentence has been quoted above as the fourth verbal parallel between *Macbeth* and *The Terrors of the Night*. The whole paragraph is immediately relevant. In the next sentence Nashe shows how melancholy disorders our sense-perceptions:

> Our reason euen like drunken fumes it displaceth and intoxicates, & yeelds vp our intellectiue apprehension to be mocked and troden vnder foote by euerie false obiect or counterfet noyse that comes neere it. (354. 18–21)

Shakespeare dramatises a similar confusion in the eery exchange after Duncan's murder, with its edgy unanswered questions, its unidentified and perhaps imaginary sounds. Curiously, Nashe's alcoholic metaphor crops up also, in Lady Macbeth's tippling:

Lady Macbeth That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold,
What hath quench'd them hath given me fire. Hark!
Peace!
It was the owl that shriek'd. . . .
Macbeth Who's there? what, ho! . . .
Lady Macbeth My husband?
Macbeth I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?
Lady Macbeth I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did you not speak?
Macbeth When?
Lady Macbeth Now.
Macbeth As I descended?
Lady Macbeth Ay.
Macbeth Hark! . . .
Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more' . . . (II. ii. 1ff.)

Nashe's next and concluding sentence is an excellent commentary:

> Heerein specially consisteth our senses defect and abuse, that those organicall parts which to the minde are ordained embassadours, doo not their message as they ought, but by some misdiet or misgouernment being distempered, faile in their report, and deliuer vp nothing but lyes and fables. (354. 21–6)

Of course, the Macbeths' guilt and later despair is more particularized than Nashe's vague melancholy, just as Nashe's broad phenomena are dramatized by the isolated incident. Nonetheless, 'melancholy' or guilty despair is the intangible source of the hallucinatory dagger, fancied cries, and the pathos of Lady Macbeth's sleep-walking—'What, will these hands ne'er be clean?' (V. i. 47–8). Nashe mentions some grotesque delusions which are powerfully expressed in the play:

> many encombred with [melancholy] haue thought . . . that if they should make water they should drowne all the world; others, that they can neuer bleed inough.
>
> (355. 2–6)

Compare Lady Macbeth's nightmare reprise ('Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?') (V. i. 42–4), and, indeed, the joint obsession which is just one sign of the Macbeths' continued unconscious sympathy:

Macbeth Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.
(II. ii. 61ff.)

Lady Macbeth . . . all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. . . .
(V. i. 56–7)

In each case, Shakespeare has made the delusion relate to the crime and guilt that caused it; like Nashe, he allows the paranormal to arise from the actual. This is precisely the burden of Nashe's most refreshing digression—his attack on the interpretation of dreams.

Nashe stresses the discrepancy between the portentous interpretation of the dreams of kings, which in beggars are dismissed as trivial, and scornfully equates palmistry with the absurdity of fortune-telling by a tree's wrinkled bark. Dreams, he irritably reiterates, are nothing but the fragmentary and distorted image of our thoughts and experiences of the day. On this subject he writes with real eloquence and originality:

> as an arrow which is shot out of a bow, is sent forth manie times with such force, that it flyeth farre beyond the marke wherat it was aymed; so our thoughts intensiuely fixt all the day time vpon a marke wee are to hit,

> are now and then ouer-drawne with such force, that they flye beyonde the marke of the day into the confines of the night. . . .
> To nothing more aptly can I compare the working of our braines after we haue vnyoakt and gone to bed, than to the glimmering and dazeling of a mans eyes when hee comes newly out of the bright Sunne into the darke shadow. . . .
> You must giue a wounded man leaue to grone while he is in dressing: Dreaming is no other than groaning, while sleepe our surgeon hath vs in cure. . . .

And finally:

> A Dreame is nothing els but the Eccho of our conceipts in the day. (355. 17–23, 30–4; 356, 3–5, 28–9)

Such is the truth of Lady Macbeth's nightmares. It is Macbeth's just assessment of the hallucinatory dagger: 'There's no such thing: / It is the bloody business which informs / Thus to mine eyes' (II. i. 47–9). It is the rational explanation of Banquo's ghost. As Nashe says, 'Let [melancholy] but affirme it hath seene a spirit (though it be but the moone-shine on the wall) the best reason wee haue cannot infringe it' (357. 20–2). Or, in Lady Macbeth's cool words:

O proper stuff!
This is the very painting of your fear;
This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said
Led you to Duncan . . .
. . . Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all's done
You look but on a stool. (III. v. 60ff.)

Other ideas in *The Terrors of the Night* can be seen in an enlarged and diffuse form in *Macbeth.* Were is not for the range of links already traced, from the verbal and minute to the more general, such parallels might be dismissed as commonplaces. For instance, Nashe opens his treatise with the Horatian tag, *Noctem peccatis & fraudibus obiice nubem*, 'By night time sinne, and cloake thy fraud with clouds' (347. 7–8 and Horace, *Epist*. i. 16. 62). Another sign of the Macbeths' unconscious sympathy is their independent invocation of a darkness which will hide their crimes from themselves as well as others:

Macbeth Stars, hide your fires.
Let not light see my black and deep desires;
The eye wink at the hand. . . .
(I. iv. 50ff.)

Lady Macbeth Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes. . . . (I. v. 51ff.)

Of course night as a time for crime is, as Nashe himself remarks, a literary cliché: 'When anie Poet would describe a horrible Tragicall accident; to adde the more probabilitie & credence vnto it, he dismally beginneth to tell, how it was darke night when it was done, and cheerfull daylight had quite abandoned the firmament' (386. 7–11). But Shakespeare redeems the cliché in *Macbeth.* It is characteristic of his dramatic technique that he gives a chance phrase from his source a theatrical embodiment. Holinshed mention that six months' darkness enveloped Scotland after King Duff's murder, so that Donwald and his wife were executed 'before [they] saw anie sunne after the murder was committed' (Bullough, VII, 484). Shakespeare's recurrent imagery of darkness translates this into a kind of metaphysical scenery, a spiritual climate, which reaches its physically enacted climax in the sleep-walking scene. The Macbeths' self-imposed darkness, once invoked, is as difficult to shake off as Banquo's ghost. It turns into the darkness of Hell, implicitly in the Porter's scene, and explicitly in the sleep-walking scene, where Lady Macbeth's weak candle is a finely staged image, guttering and ineffectual against the metaphysically encroaching dark, the knowledge that 'Hell is murky'. Nashe's comments are apt:

> Ah woe be to the solitarie man that hath his sinnes continually about him, that hath no withdrawing place from the diuell and his temptations.

> Much I wonder how treason and murder dispense with the darknes of the night, how they can shriue themselues to it, and not raue and die. Me thinkes they shuld imagine that hell imbraceth them round, when she ouer spreads them with her blacke pitchie mantle.
>
> (357. 37–358. 7)

They could serve as an apt summary of the mental deterioration which is the play's main action.

Nashe's attitude to guilt, and its hopeless dependence on superstition, is equally illuminating as a description of Macbeth's predicament:

> Dreames to none are so fearfull, as to those whose accusing priuate guilt expects mischiefe euerie hower for their merit. Wonderfull superstitious are such persons in obseruing euerie accident that befalls them; and that their superstition is as good as an hundred furies to torment them. Neuer in this world shall he enioy one quiet day, that once hath giuen himselfe ouer to be her slaue . . . his destinie stands vpon her triall, and till she bee acquited or condemned, he is miserable.
>
> (358. 8–17)

Again, compare Macbeth, enslaved by the witches' deceptive prophecies, which he too recognizes as infernal torture:

> Infected be the air whereon they ride,
> And damn'd all those that trust them!
> (VI, i. 138–9)
>
> I pull in resolution and begin
> To doubt the equivocation of the fiend
> That lies like truth. . . . (V. v. 42ff.)
>
> . . . be these juggling fiends no more believ'd,
> That palter with us in a double sense;
> That keep the word of promise to our ear,
> And break it to our hope. . . . (V. vii. 48ff.)

After each of the three apparitions' prophecies, Macbeth cannot rest content. Relief is promptly consumed by doubt, and the greed for further confirmation: 'Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution thanks; / Thou hast harp'd my fear aright. But one word more— . . . Then live Macduff: what need I fear of thee? / But yet I'll make assurance double sure . . . Sweet bodements, good . . . Yet my heart / Throbs to know one thing . . . ' (IV. i. 73ff.). These riddling prophecies are an extension of the double truth proclaimed so emphatically in the first scene. The Devil *can* speak true; momentarily, foul is fair, and hope blossoms into murder. Thereafter, Macbeth's destiny stands upon superstition's trial, and he is miserable.

The similarities between *The Terrors of the Night* and *Macbeth* are multiple and pervasive. Less subtle, but still interesting, are some unexpected concurrences between *Macbeth* and Lavater's *Of Ghostes and Spirites, Walking by Night*. Lavater is more orthodox than Nashe, allowing dutiful credence to divine and infernal manifestations. But this is preceded by a long, if prosaic, set of modifications, neatly summarized by such chapter headings as 'Melancolie persons and madde men, imagining things which in very deed are not', and so on, covering the delusions of the timorous, deaf, dim-sighted, imbecile and lunatic. Many of his anecdotes are suggestive. For instance, in his third chapter, on the delusions of fearful men, Lavater quotes a story from Plutarch about

> one called Bessus: who after he had murthered his father, hid himselfe a long season. But on a time as he went to supper, espying a swallowes neast, with his speare he thrust it downe: and when those which supped with him, misliked and abhored his cruelty (for we like not those men that trouble litle birdes and other beastes, because we iudge them austere and cruell) he answered: haue they not (saieth hee) falsly accused me, a great while crying out on me, that I haue slaine and murthered my father. . . .
>
> (III. B4)[11]

Bessus was consequently condemned for the crime. The anecdote is a particularly helpful analogue for a hitherto unexplained detail in Macbeth's horrified outburst after seeing Banquo's ghost:

> It will have blood, they say; blood will have blood:
> Stones have been known to move and trees to speak;
> Augurs and understood relations have
> By maggot-pies and choughs and rooks brought forth
> The secret'st man of blood. . . . (III. iv. 122ff.)

Professor Muir follows other editors in quoting from Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, and Vergil, for speaking trees, and from King James's *Daemonologie* for the corpse of a murdered man bleeding in the presence of a murderer (a detail dramatized in *Richard III*, I. ii, when Richard approaches Henry VI's corpse, rather than suggested here). The bird references are left unexplained. Further, Shakespeare's imagination twins on Lavater's story, to produce the bird imagery surrounding Macduff's tragedy. Macbeth is portrayed as another guiltily cruel Bessus, destroying a bird's nest in pointless self-defence. Macduff's wife, like 'the poor wren, / The most diminutive of birds, will fight— / Her young ones in the her nest— against the owl' (IV. ii. 9–11); her son promises to live 'As birds do' (IV. ii. 31), and dies in the shell (Murderer: 'What! you egg! / Young fry of treachery?') (IV. ii. 81–2). Macduff, as unconsciously responsive to his wife's imagery as Macbeth is to Lady Macbeth, echoes his murdered brood in the very next scene: 'O hell-kite! All? / What—all my pretty chickens and their dam / At one fell swoop?' (IV. ii, 217ff.). Such an expansion of one narrative detail from the source into an identifiable image-cluster is a characteristic tendency of Shakespeare's theatrical technique—as we have already seen, in his conversion of Holinshed's bald fact of the six month's darkness.

Again, Lavater quotes a grotesquely vivid hallucination from Procopius's account of Theodoricus, who put to death Boethius and his son-in-law Symmachus:

> as Theodoricus satte at meate, a fishes head being brought before him, he sawe in it the countenance of Symmachus looking horribly, which byting the nether lip with lowring eyes seemed to threaten him. (III. B4)

The parallel with Banquo's apparition at the banquet, nodding and shaking its gory locks at Macbeth, is obvious. Holinshed is the source for the prosaic portent of the walking Birnam wood, but it is also similar to an incident reported by Lavater, in which the Burgundian army mistook a field overgrown with high thistles for the embattled pikes of the enemy (IV. C2^v). Lavater has neither the irritability of Nashe's scepticism, nor his idiosyncratic exuberances of style, yet Nashe, Lavater and Shakespeare all concur in their preference for a psychological approach to the paranormal. And Shakespeare, like Lavater, can combine this with the orthodox Christian attitude to infernal torment. Lavater's seventeenth chapter is given over to a discussion of the question later put by Banquo: 'What! can the devil speak true?' (I. iii. 107). Lavater, temperate and prosy as he is, inevitably concurs with Banquo:

> The diuel sometimes vttereth the truth, that his words may haue the more credit, and that he may the more easily beguile them. . . . (XVII. Y3)

> *Banquo* . . . But 'tis strange:
> And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
> The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
> Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
> In deepest consequence. (I. iii. 122ff.)

St. Anne's College
Oxford

NOTES

[1] G. Bullough: *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (1957–75), VII, p. 448.

[2] Bullough, introduction to the section on *Macbeth*, passim. The quotation is taken by him from K. Muir: *Shakespeare's Sources, I* (1957), p. 180.

[3] R. B. McKerrow (ed.): *The Works of Thomas Nashe* (1910). Quotations from the text of *The Terrors of the Night* come from vol. I and give page and line number only.

[4] J. Livingston Lowes: *The Road to Xanadu* (1927), p. 38.

[5] McKerrow (ed.): *The Works of Nashe*, IV. 198, and Arden ed. *Macbeth* (1969), pp. 12 (note to I. iii. 11) and 30 (note to I. v. 38), and see note 7 below.

[6] The two exceptions are the serpent passage and the Horatian tag, both of which come from the first pages of the work (B^v and $B2^v$ respectively).

[7] M. P. Tilley: *A Dictionary of Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Michigan, 1950), F3 and F29. Muir follows Furness in quoting Nashe: 'euery thing must bee interpreted backward as Witches say their

Pater-noster, good being the character of bad, and bad of good' (*The Terrors of the Night*, 361. 32–4)—part of an attack on negative superstitious prognostication.

[8] H. N. Paul compares this with a much more distant passage from S. Harsnett's *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1613), pp. 131–2; see *The Royal Play of 'Macbeth'* (New York 1950), p. 54.

[9] Emrys Jones sees a non-supernatural parallel to Macbeth's invocation of the murdered Banquo to supper in Suetonius's Life of Claudius, as the typical behaviour of the scatter-brained tyrant, and compares the apparition of Mors at Herod's banquet celebrating the massacre of the men-children in the *Ludus Conventriae*. See *The Origins of Shakespeare* (1977), pp. 26–8 and 79–81.

[10] See J. W. Draper: '*Macbeth* as a compliment to James I', *Englische Studien* v. 72 (1938), pp. 207–20, and, covering the same ground less thoroughly and in ignorance of Draper's work, H. V. Calhoun: 'James I and the witch scenes in *Macbeth*', *Shakespeare Association Bulletin* (1942), XVII, no. 4, pp. 184–9. King James's *Daemonologie* was written to prove the Devil did waylay man in the person of witches and that they were therefore worthy of severe punishment. It was quoted in contemporary trials and intensified the attack against witches. The King began to doubt his certainty in 1605, when he had Harsnett interview the fourteen-year-old Ann Gunter, who was found to have feigned hysteria and falsely accused three witches; his attitude was further modified by comparable cases.

[11] References are to chapter and page signature. Dimmer versions of this and the following anecdote from Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1572, repr. 1886), p. 41, and de Loyer's *Treatise of Specters . . .*, trans. Z. Jones (1605), pp. 112–3, are quoted without analysis by H. N. Paul, op. cit. p. 57–9 and Bullough VII, p. 463 and n. 3.

The Placing of Loss: Elizabeth Bowen's *To the North*

HERMIONE LEE

> Towards the end of April a breath from the north blew cold down Milan platforms to meet the returning traveller. Uncertain thoughts of home filled the station restaurant where the English sat lunching uneasily, facing the clock. The Anglo-Italian express—Chiasso, Lucerne, Basle and Boulogne—leaves at 2.15: it is not a *train de luxe*. To the north there were still the plains, the lakes, the gorges of the Ticino, but, as the glass brass-barred doors of the restaurant flashed and swung, that bright circular park outside with its rushing girdle of trams was the last of Italy. (p. 13)[1]

THE OPENING of *To the North* is deceptive: leaving Italy is not, in itself, to be of importance. Cecilia Summers, the 'young widow' waiting for the train, is not to be the heroine. Its tone is significantly odd and ambiguous. The satirical treatment of a carefully demarcated social world is apparently anticipated, and this is borne out by the ensuing emphasis on manner and properties. Cecilia is first identified by her fur-coat and dressing-case; at lunch she is thrown together with a young man who has a cigarette case engraved with his name, 'Markie', an old Harrovian tie, and a grand set of acquaintances in Rome. Their brittle dialogue ('It looks like a lake.' 'Yes, doesn't it; terribly') is of a piece with the marked worldiness of the narrative. The England to which Cecilia returns is comfortable. She shares an elegant home in St. John's Wood with her sister-in-law Emmeline (whose travel agency is financed by 'some' of her own capital) and is an object of interest to the 'immaculate' Julian Tower, who has 'inherited a rather too flourishing family business of more than two hundred years' standing'. Both young women are related to Lady Waters, who may be a comic character but whose belief in the absolute reality of her social setting ('There is only one world') is also the novel's. Affluent people lunch, dine, and go to parties; we are often told what they are wearing. The fashions are exactly registered:

> [Julian's sister] wanted a massage after her journey, a fitting at her corsetière's, a new silver saucepan to boil milk in her bedroom, a chat with her specialist and one of those mackintosh coats she had just seen advertised for her dog. She desired to visit her hat shop, which concealed itself upstairs in Mayfair with a discretion so sinister one might expect to rap three times on a panel or be regarded narrowly through a grille. (p. 155–6)

Nevertheless, there is a discomforting tone to the first paragraph of the novel, strongly suggesting that the material world in which it has its being is to be undermined. The knowing information about the Anglo-Italian express sounds a little ominous. The season, like the travellers, is 'uncertain'. Suspended between anticipation and loss, they lunch 'uneasily', awaiting their journey to the north. They are not moving yet, but the swinging of the bright restaurant doors and the rushing of trams through the bright park—violent, repetitive images—precipitate them towards movement, and, even, with 'brass-barred' and 'girdle', towards an idea of imprisonment. That they sit 'facing the clock' hints most forcibly of all at the idea of a train journey as a journey out of life, into the after-world (like the horrifying taxi-ride in Elizabeth Bowen's later story, *The Demon Lover*). Cecilia and Markie's blasé dialogue is not merely intended for our entertainment—nor, indeed, for theirs. As the train 'fled . . . with a shriek' to Lucerne, 'lashing about its passengers as though they were bound to a dragon's tail', Cecilia imagines herself in hell:

> And in an afterworld, she might deserve just such a companion: too close, glancing at her—if any shreds of the form still clung to the spirit—without sympathy, with just such a cold material knowingness. (p. 16)

There is no doubt (we are told that 'neither had nice characters') that Cecilia and Markie are a punishment to one another for being what they are. The image of a journey in hell is not insistent, but the language keeps edging into unaccountable ferocity. 'On a long journey . . . the brain like a horrified cat leaps clawing from object to object.' The climactic last page of the novel, Emmeline's desperate drive with Markie (whom she loves and who has betrayed her) 'to the north' and to their deaths, is prefigured in the oddly sinister tone, the incipient violence of the first chapter.

Violent deaths (Gerald's in *The Last September*, Max's in *The House in Paris*, Robert's in *The Heat of the Day*) are symptoms of betrayal in Elizabeth Bowen's work, and mark the passing of innocence, whether personal or national. In order that their moral significance should not be blurred by the dramatic shock of feeling the deaths evoke, Elizabeth Bowen establishes from the start a pattern of images which will necessitate them. That the pure-hearted Emmeline should be driven to what is, in effect, murder and suicide, is a badge of her innocence. But the ending of this novel is not therefore grotesquely sensational, as Elizabeth Bowen sometimes chooses to be in horror stories like 'The Cat Jumps'. Rather it has an air of classical formality: the motifs are seen to accumulate and finally cohere in a formulation which is at once simple and extreme.

Unlike her sister-in-law, Emmeline is not quite of this world. She is ethereal, angelic, 'pale and clear', 'more than half transparent materially'. When Julian first meets her she is drinking iced tea, dressed in silver, and sitting in an alcove 'alarmingly flooded with white light'. She is repeatedly described as short-sighted and thus disconnected from her surroundings; 'a curious distant look, not like a woman's' is apt to come across her face in conversation. Her work, the charming, eccentric travel agency, partly serves to make her substantial by giving her pragmatic, competent qualities, but also sustains the ideas of distance and aerial aloofness, suggesting that she is always on the point of no return. Before she meets Markie, she is the unawakened ice maiden, the unfallen angel: 'nothing could be as dear as the circle of reading light round her solitary pillow'.

On the other hand, Markie, as Cecilia perceives at their first meeting, is Satanic. (She notices at once that he has the 'quick-lidded eyes of an agreeable reptile'.) He is the familiar modern anti-hero who has lost touch with the sources of faith and idealism. Reason is his God (he is a very good lawyer) and he masters the threatening implications of love and passion by reducing them to sensual needs. He is averse to any kind of discomfort: suffering ('out of place in the rational scheme'), the commitments of marriage, the strain of an affair that demands too much, nature's alien impersonality and the boredom inflicted by machines which may be beyond his control—he can't drive, and has never flown before meeting Emmeline—all come under this head. He will abandon Emmeline because her spirituality alarms him: 'One can't live on top of the Alps', he tells her. Evidently his fear of her comes from his *not* being entirely rational and pragmatic. He is an 'uneasy moralist', who, for hedonistic ends, has repressed his sensibilities. Elizabeth Bowen's moral hostility to this character is as pronounced as Henry James's for Gilbert Osmond or D. H. Lawrence's for Gerald Crich, with whom Markie has similarities: both minds are 'curious and cold', both are afraid in 'a strangely indifferent, sterile way',[2] neither one can 'live on top of the Alps'. But while her repugnance for Markie is evident, Elizabeth Bowen shares the ability of those greater writers to persuade the reader of what it feels like to be a damned soul:

> The edge of his mind was restless with superstition: like natives before the solid advance of imperial forces, aspiration, feeling, all sense of the immaterial had retreated in him before reason to some craggy hinterland where, having made no terms with the conqueror, they were submitted to no control and remained a menace. Like savages coming to town on a fair day to skip and chaffer . . . feeling crept out in him from some unmapped region. His brain held his smallish, over-clear view of life in its rigid circle. (p. 204)

Cecilia can take Markie or leave him ('All this *âme damnée* is such a bore') but Emmeline is melted by his desire for her (Julian is even made to envy him for 'cutting so much ice').

> For here Markie was: in his presence . . . this idea of pleasure as isolated, arctic, regarding its own heart only, became desolating to Emmeline as a garden whose flowers were ice. Those north lights colouring the cold

> flowers became her enemies; her heart warming or weakening she felt at war with herself inside this cold zone of solitude. She desired lowness and fallibility, longing to break the mirror and touch the earth. (p. 145)

The sense of strain here—too much ice, too many mannered pairings like 'warming or weakening'—is caused by the effort to impose the images necessary to the novel's formal organization on Emmeline's train of thought. This is a risk inherent in the plan to load Emmeline and Markie's relationship with elemental imagery and ominous images of travel. But at the two points of greatest intensity in the affair, the week-end of Emmeline's seduction in Paris, and their final car-drive together, the patterning of images contributes to a satisfying aesthetic logic. Markie's nervousness and Emmeline's exhilaration (she is, after all, in her element) on their plane flight to Paris anticipate his sexual sensations 'of having been overshot, of having, in some final soaring flight of her exaltation, been outdistanced'. Emmeline makes a joke about the violent pace of Paris taxis being like 'the Last Ride Together'. Such elements project the idyllic section of the novel towards the powerful, catastrophic ending. Emmeline, wearing the original silver dress, drives Markie northwards, back into the element which he has defiled, in order to take revenge. This scheme is not recognized by the heroine: she acts involuntarily. Those fey looks culminate in a final distractedness; while Markie struggles to bring her back to earth, she is given up to speed. The associations that have been made between her work (over which she has lost control), her passion and her unearthly innocence fall into place.

> Something gave way.
> An immense idea of departure—expresses getting steam up and crashing from termini, liners clearing the docks, the shadows of planes rising, caravans winding out into the first dip of the desert . . . possessed her spirit, now launched like the long arrow. . . . Like earth shrinking and sinking, irrelevant, under the rising wings of a plane, love with its unseen plan . . . dropped to a depth below Emmeline . . . She was lost to her own identity, a confining husk. (p. 325–6)

Emmeline and Markie, though inside a partly comic novel, are thus implacably directed by the author to their end as tragic protagonists. The strict formality of the plot—two women, two lovers, Henry's death before the start and Emmeline's and Markie's in conclusion, a journey to begin with and a journey to end with—undermines the characters' opportunities for free choice, in the same way as the relentless patterning of the images which dominate them. Even when the emphasis is on the comic world (traditionally one of choice and self-improvement, as in Jane Austen and Forster) the freedom of the will seems no more than a toy, or as Emmeline thinks, idly considering silly little Gerda Bligh's indecisiveness about her marriage, 'a mistake'. Cecilia and Julian, although less extreme and more engaging than the tragic pair, are also enfeebled by their freedom of choice:

> She nightly returned to . . . her sense of being a far too general gift to the world . . . a novel for any subscriber to take out. (p. 181)
>
> . . . something in him that would not bring off the simplest relationship, that could be aware of any relationship only as something to be brought off. (p. 54)

They dither, are indefinite, finally decide to marry; it seems to be a good thing, and they seem to have chosen it (though Elizabeth Bowen characteristically bypasses, so as to diminish, the moment of decision). But Cecilia, though constantly weighing up her choices (Should she wear a rose at dinner? Should she go to America?) is as much a victim as the more obviously 'driven' Emmeline. Her first husband, Emmeline's brother Henry, died soon after their marriage. Her character has hardened accordingly, her emotional stature has been lessened by the death. She is not to blame for this. Is she then to blame for casually bringing Markie to Emmeline, and for remaining uninvolved? We are meant to feel that both Julian and Cecilia could have 'done something' to prevent Emmeline's tragedy, and that the pangs of conscience will be theirs. But that distinct idea of moral responsibility is undercut by the inevitability of the events. There is the same ironic pitting of volition against haplessness, but more starkly done, in Emmeline's relationship with Markie. Both express a belief in the will. 'She had undone herself; she was her own victim' Markie thinks. It is the lawyer's point of view: 'Justice . . . remained Markie's cold ally'. But Emmeline agrees with this judgement: 'One does oneself in', she says to him. Both, however, are seen to be compelled:

> She might be said to be drawn, with a force of which she was hardly aware, by what existed in Markie in spite of himself. (p. 99)

Of course Markie is a predator and the child-like Emmeline is his victim. But, like Portia, in *The Death of the Heart*, she is as dangerous to the fallen adult world as it is to her. Her innocence, her immoderate 'exaltation' in love, her 'too high idea of life and himself' terrify Markie, who senses that the victim can become the avenger.

His fear leads into a histrionic, grotesque passage on Tragedy which removes the novel to its furthest point from realism and formalizes the characters into aspects of a genre:

> Here figures cast unknown shadows; passion knows no crime, only its own movement; steel and the cord go with the kiss. Innocence walks with violence; violence is innocent, cold as fate; between the mistress's kiss and the blade's is a hair's-breadth only, and no disparity; every door leads to death. . . . The curtain comes down, the book closes—but who is to say that this is not so? (p. 248)

The high ritual tone is not a success. It sounds like an affected pastiche of the elements of Jacobean tragedy. But the passage, unusually choric, is evidently intended as a major statement of the novel's ontology. When an implacable idea of necessity is combined with a romantic belief in the personal existence of goodness and innocence, extreme characters must answer to extreme destinies.

The combination is bound to create a problem of realism. Sometimes the tragic formality to which the story aspires is laid bare, as in the passage just quoted; sometimes, as in the opening paragraph, realism is used as a cloak. In other ways too, Elizabeth Bowen has surprisingly little difficulty in making an extreme relationship work at the level of the possible. Because Emmeline falls for Markie unseen, between Chapters 5 and 6, the temptation not to believe in it is lessened. The chink in Emmeline's armour is made plausible by the susceptibility of Henry, who was like her, and who married Cecilia. It is partly by attaching Emmeline to Cecilia, in a 'quiet marriage' of 'domestic confidence' that Elizabeth Bowen roots her in a prosaic world. The conflict between her commitments to Cecilia and to Markie, and the constant interplay of the plot between the two couples (with a suggestion of their being wrongly paired) gives Emmeline's affair a more complicated, ordinary, humanized aspect. Emmeline's angelic qualities, evidence of Elizabeth Bowen's belief that there must be 'at least one *magnetic* character . . . capable of keying the reader up, as though he . . . were in the presence of someone he is in love with',[3] are insisted upon, but not exclusively. A context of the normal is provided:

> Emmeline lunched not far from Woburn Place at a shop called 'The Coffee Pot', with Peter Lewis, her partner. She read a book about Poland, he blue-pencilled manuscript; they ate poached eggs on spinach, each paid for their own lunches and did not speak to each other. (p 47)

Her rare nature is placed against a group of amusing minor characters who fall into two categories: predators (the meddlesome Lady Waters and the fearsomely efficient Miss Armitage, who takes over the office) and hapless muddlers who wear their hearts on their sleeve, like Pauline, Julian's embarrassing niece (the visit to whose school is a splendid comic turn), Miss Tripp, the secretary who has a painful crush on Emmeline, and Gerda, a 'child-wife' in whose marital difficulties Lady Waters takes an obviously disastrous interest. The latter set provide clouded, imperfect versions of Emmeline's innocence; the former stand for the hostility of the adult world. The transcendental qualities which we have to allow Emmeline are thus offset by her relationship to characters who exist on a more moderate plane.

It is, however, the treatment of place which provides the most versatile, complex vehicle for the novel's deeper meanings. This is not to imply a 'staticness' (which is, as Elizabeth Bowen calls it, a 'dead weight' if scene setting is undramatic[4]). When she says that 'Nothing can happen nowhere',[5] she points to her interest in places which do not readily qualify as 'somewhere'. Boarding houses, shut-up homes, empty villas, obscure shops one can never find again, parks at dusk—places where people have stopped living or are on their way to somewhere else—such settings (particularly in the short stories) are always at the heart of what is odd or ominous in 'the Bowen terrain'.[6] They attract people who have lost their homes or their way, such as Lady Waters's guests, 'a little party of exiles', dragged off to visit a Roman villa, closed on Sundays, who 'cast round in spirit, to find nothing'. They are places for 'the disinherited', like the all-night road house in the story of that name.[7]

> A glittering Neon sign like wolves' eyes read: OPEN ALL NIGHT, at which thought a dry weariness pervaded the brain. . . . The road-house stood at the cross-roads, its row of Christmas-card windows shedding a fictitious glow. . . . But inside there was no-one. A long row of swinging lanterns bobbed in their own horrid light as they pushed open the door. The lounge was empty and bald as the inside of a band-box, glazed with synthetic panelling. The chairs were askew, empty, with flattened cushions; ash-trays sent up a cold fume; the place wore an air of sudden, sheepish vacuity, as though a large party had just got up and gone out. The barman leaned, yawning, just inside the bar shutter. When they came in, he took no notice. Davina's friends had not come.

The place stands for a spiritual malaise, not just the feckless Davina's, but whole generations'. Similar venues occur in *To the North*, from the station at Milan to the 'jaded glare of an all night café', glimpsed by Markie on the final journey. Travel, which provides the *raison d'être* for such settings, has a moral as well as a symbolic significance, caricatured in a comic platitude by Lady Waters: '*This age . . . is far more than restless; it is decentralized*'. Markie's sinister flat, cut off at the top of his sister's 'very high, dark-red house in Lower Sloane Street' with its shadowy corners and its invisible cook whose 'reedy, ghostly whistle' makes Emmeline jump, is the major example of such impermanent 'nowhere' places, symptoms of deracination. Set against them are places offering peace and stability. But all are potentially lost paradises; a careful colouring of anticipated nostalgia fills the descriptions. Emmeline's office, 'a studio to her, even a shrine' dwindles to a scene of horror. Oudenarde Road, leafy, secluded, and charming, is lost to Emmeline in her imagination:

> Emmeline said: 'She's going to marry Julian'. . . . Timber by timber, Oudenarde Road fell to bits, as small houses are broken up daily to widen the roar of London. She saw the door open on emptiness: blanched walls as though after a fire. Houses shared with women are built on sand. She thought: 'My home, my home.' (p. 278)

(The razing of the loved house is, indeed, a personal obsession for Elizabeth Bowen, stemming from her fear that Bowen's Court would be destroyed in the Troubles—'so often in my mind's eye did I see it burning'.[8] Bowen's Court did not burn, but long after, in 1959, the next owner demolished it.)

Lady Waters's old-fashioned country house, 'Farraways' (an unapologetically significant name), simply depressing for the urban Cecilia, is a garden of Eden for Emmeline:

> Here Emmeline, step-child of her uneasy century, thought she would like to live. . . . But already a vague expectation of Monday and Tuesday filled her; looking out from the shade of the lime already she saw the house with its white window-frames like some image of childhood, unaccountably dear but remote. (p. 89)

Farraways is decorous, conventional, pastoral; but it cannot be a refuge to Emmeline from the modern world—Markie's domain—a world inhabited, in hand-to-mouth fashion, by spiritual exiles. The inadequate protection for innocence offered by country retreats is enacted in Emmeline and Markie's last weekend together, in a friend's cottage near Devizes. Markie's impatience and discomfort at the idea of a rural idyll is painfully set against Emmeline's romantic enthusiasm. She packs enough food for a week, but Markie insists on going back to the town, to eat in Devizes. The small matter of the meal is telling.

> The cottage, the late lovely sense of arrival tugged at her heart. 'Here we are,' she had thought, coming in: but she had been wrong, they were not. For ever coming and going, no peace, no peace. What did Markie always want to avoid? (p. 270)

Emmeline's betrayal is thus intended not simply as a melodramatic romance or as the working-out of a theory of extremes (the angelic and the daemonic) confronting each other, but as a symptom of a more general, historical state of loss and dereliction. The emphasis on material things, as well as being necessary for the novel's social, comic vein, justifies itself morally by being emblematic. Sheltered, gracious living in a place with its own past is considered not only as a good thing in itself but also as a symbol of innocence. This implies, naturally enough, an opposition between rural and urban values which, while it casts a cold eye on modern life, is compatible with the tradition of Jane Austen and Forster. Oudenarde Road is as much of a secret grove as one can find in London; its peace is destroyed by Markie, an essentially cosmopolitan villain.[9]

To strengthen the novel's broader meanings, landscapes of dereliction, which are not required as locales for the action, are imported as illustrations of or metaphors for states of mind. Certainly the consistently suggestive use of place gives these passages homogeneity with the rest of the novel, but they are intended to strike a strange note, and indeed stand out like miniature short stories—the more so since they anticipate so many of the settings, the sinister, autumnal, suburban villas, found in *The Cat Jumps* (1934) or *Look at all Those Roses* (1941).

> Markie, for the good of his liver, went for a walk by himself after Sunday lunch, uphill into the woods. No birds sang: it had been worse than that day in Keats. Leaves, rotting and rusty, deadened his steps; the afternoon had been sodden and quite toneless; it began to

> be dark early. Down there, between the dreary trunks of the beeches, houses lay like a sediment in the cup of the misty valley: great gabled carcases, villas aping the manor, belfried garages where you could feel the cars get cold. There were no lights, not a thread of smoke from a chimney. Afternoon stupor reigned; there was nothing more that they wanted; down there they all sat in the dark. . . . Then someone's wife opened a cold piano: she tinkled, she tippetted, she struck false chords and tried them again. God knew what she thought she was doing. The notes fell on his nerves like the drops of condensed mist all round on the clammy beech branches. . . . Penetrated by all these kinds of discomfort he had raged in the bare meek woods. . . . The piano stopped, he went downhill again to tea.
>
> . . . He had said: 'How nicely you play!' She said, 'But I wasn't playing. I don't know what I was doing: what was I doing?' Her husband did not know either: he knocked ashes about in the fire and said it was out. 'Did you have a nice walk?' they had asked him.
>
> 'Where did you go?' Markie could not remember. 'Oh well,' they said, 'all the walks are the same round here. But it's pretty country, isn't it?' No one else came in: they said they lived very quietly. 'Still,' Markie's friend had said, 'it does grow on one.'
>
> Emmeline, considering this when he angrily came to an end, had inquired: 'Is it a ghost story?' (pp. 80–81)

The point of this landscape (which is superfluous to the plot of the novel) is not simply to show up Markie as a lost soul, alienated alike from human beings and from the 'meek' countryside which they have colonized, but to put him in a place which is not a home for anyone, a place entirely populated with lost souls. The grotesquely fraudulent architecture, the cars getting old like corpses, the horrid, inexplicable piano playing, the people sitting 'down there in the dark', the dead fire, these purgatorial touches reverberate, suggesting much more than a chillingly exact picture of a familiar scene. Something has gone wrong with the civilization: it has become a kind of morgue.

The emotional deprivations from which Elizabeth Bowen's characters suffer (either as a temperamental disability or in response to blows of fate) are so consistently formalized as localities that an eerie overlap between interior and exterior landscapes results. A set piece of description, looked at again, is revealed as a Homeric metaphor for the state of a soul:

> When a great house has been destroyed by fire . . . the master has not, perhaps, the heart or the money to rebuild. Trees that were its companions are cut down and the estate sold up to the speculator. Villas spring up in red rows, each a home for someone, enticing brave little shops, radiant picture palaces: perhaps a park is left round the lake, where couples go boating. Lovers' lanes in asphalt replace the lonely green rides; the obelisk having no approaches is taken away. After dark—where once there was silence, a tree's shadow drawn slowly across the grass by the moon, or no moon, an exhalation of darkness—rows of windows come out like lanterns in pink and orange; boxed in bright light hundreds of lives repeat their pattern; wireless picks up a tune from street to street. . . . Life here is liveable, kindly and sometimes gay; there is not a ghost of space or silence; the great house with its dominance and its radiation of avenues is forgotten. When spring is sweet in the air, snowdrops under the paling, when blue autumn blurs the trim streets' perspective or the low sun in winter dazzles the windows' gold—something touches the heart, someone, disturbed, pauses, hand on a villa gate. But not to ask: What was **here?**
>
> With the quick fancy, the nerves and senses Cecilia could almost love. . . . With her, the gay little streets flourished, but, brave when her house fell, she could not regain some entirety of spirit. Disability seems a hard reward for courage. (pp. 136–137)

Such an ornate analogy turns the dramatic, personal material of the story into a casebook on the effects of loss. The author's romantic language cloaks her disenchanted vision. (Sean O'Faolain rightly calls the novels 'exquisitely composed logs of disaster'.[10]) The ruined lives with which we are invited to sympathize are reduced to symptoms of an 'uneasy century'—so that there is a tension between the violent, passionate elements in their experience and the clinical use to which they are put by the author. The effect is not a cosy or an endearing one (particularly given its social assumptions: there can be no doubt, for all their gaiety and courage, that the little villas are inferior to the Big House). But it shows that it is not enough to treat Elizabeth Bowen as merely a writer of sentimental romances, another Rosamond Lehmann. The losses she chronicles are more than personal.

University of York

NOTES

[1] All page references are to the Collected Edition, Jonathan Cape, 1950, reprinted 1970.

[2] *Women in Love,* 'The Industrial Magnate'.

[3] 'Notes on Writing a Novel', *Orion III* (1946), reprinted in *Collected Impressions* (1950), p. 253.

[4] ibid., p. 254.

[5] ibid., p. 253.

[6] Elizabeth Bowen, *Pictures and Conversations* (1975), p. 35.

[7] 'The Disinherited' published two years after *To the North* (1932) with which it has much in common, in *The Cat Jumps* (1934).

[8] 1962 Preface to *The Last September* (1928).

[9] Geoffrey Wagner points out that he anticipates Harrison in *The Heat of the Day,* also about 'the betrayal of cities'. See 'Elizabeth Bowen and the Artificial Novel', *E in C,* XIII (1963), p. 157.

[10] See *The Vanishing Hero: Studies in Novelists of the Twenties* (1956), p. 182.

The Significance of Beckett's *Still*

JOHN PILLING

NOTHING better illustrates how far Beckett has travelled in forty years of writing than the way he has 'enlivened the last phase of his solipsism' not, as his 'sometime friend' Belacqua did (in *More Pricks than Kicks*, 1934), 'with the belief that the best thing he had to do was to move constantly from place to place', but rather with the belief that the best thing he can do is to keep still. In his earliest published story, 'Assumption' (1929), Beckett spoke in a remarkably prescient phrase of his protagonist's 'remarkable faculty for whispering the turmoil down' and in a later story 'The Calmative' (1946) he attempted, unsuccessfully, to appropriate this remarkable faculty for himself. In *From an abandoned work* (1955) he again recorded his 'great love . . . for all things still and rooted' but our abiding impression is of a figure restlessly compelled to 'stravague' the roads without the slightest prospect of achieving tranquillity. Until recently it has seemed that the only inhabitants of Beckett's universe capable of achieving something like the immobility of an inanimate object were the people in his drama, pre-eminently the static Winnie of *Happy Days*. But with the publication of *Still* in 1973 it became clear that even the wanderers that populate his fiction could achieve a condition of stillness that would allow them to rest momentarily from their torments. *Still* is perhaps the most impressive example in Beckett's recent *œuvre* that language need not be an obstacle preventing the writer from expressing his most intimate concerns—as it had seemed to be in the 1940s and 1950s when Beckett was creating an 'art of failure'—but may rather be a medium perfectly adapted to 'whispering the turmoil down' and creating an art of success.

Beckett's ability to write, in *Still*, a prose of spellbinding translucency has to be seen against a background of more or less distinguished failures to solve the creative problems that have troubled him for so long. His first important breakthrough, the abandonment of fictive selves that bore only a tenuous relationship to being as he himself experienced it, took many years to accomplish. In *Malone Dies* (1949) we see him beginning to be less concerned with the relationship between fiction and being and more interested in the constituent elements of being itself. But *Malone Dies*, despite passage of great beauty, is an imperfectly resolved work, and the outcrops of fictional construct that interfere with Beckett's excavation of the site of selfhood remain to trouble *The Unnamable* (1950) and the *Texts for Nothing* (1950–52). He seems to have begun *From an abandoned work* in a spirit not unlike that with which he began his first full-length fiction, the unpublished *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (1932),[1] relying on a spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions and not concerning himself unduly with the traditional fictional conventions of time and space and coherent narrative motivation. But by this comparatively late stage in his career he clearly found it impossible to silence the impulse to shape material, and obviously felt compelled to restrain and arrest the haphazard flow of his creature's lucubrations with a more and more weary and perfunctory reminder of what day it was and what time it was and all the usual paraphernalia of fiction-making. The protagonist of *From an abandoned work* may think lovingly of 'a long unbroken time without before or after, light or dark, from or towards or at, the old half-knowledge of when and where gone, and of what, but kinds of things still, all at once', but only in *How it is* (1959–61) is this paradoxical state achieved, and it turns out anyway to be even more violent and turbulent than anything that preceded it.

There is an integrity of vision in *How it is*, notwithstanding its daunting obliquity, which compels one's admiration and wonder. Beckett creates a sense of 'vast tracts' of time and space and yet contrives to suggest that all time is now and all space is here. The idiosyncratic and rudimentary syntax is a perfect vehicle for Beckett's new realization that 'less means more', that the infinite is contained within the infinitesimal. The fact that he has ceased to inquire into the origin of the impulse to write and acceded to the new dispensation of 'I say it as I hear it' allows him to present an atomized world of 'bits and scraps' that can coexist alongside one another and thereby suggest that they are less discrete than they at first appear. It may seem ironical that in order to speak of his most intimate concerns Beckett found himself obliged to adopt, in his writing since *How it is*, a coldly dispassionate and distilled prose style of extreme formality quite alien to his former practice. But this is really more a matter of strategy than of irony, an attempt to destroy finally any remnants of rhetorical excess that may have survived the massive self-critique and self-demolition that are at the very heart of *How it is*. The patterning which kept *Murphy, Watt, Molloy* and even the last two parts of the trilogy on the fictional rails has rotted down to repetition of small units of language that are an index of what Beckett finds himself helpless in the face of, and at the same time an earnest of his sincerity in itemizing an indubitable reality. Time is no longer seen as a unitary sequence of points on a line, but as an atomized flux in which memories, fictions and *aperçus* congregate. Space is no longer seen in terms of the approved conventions of mensuration, but instead as a medium conditioned by one's own volatile and dynamic inner rhythms. Syntax is no longer a simple matter of subject and predicate, but rather a continuum in which there is no subordination of one element to another. It is no longer a question of going 'back to where all went out and on from there' as he thinks he might do in the third of the *Texts for Nothing*, nor of going 'back to that far day, any far day' as in *From an abandoned work*. His concerns have become altogether more immediate and importunate.

The new Beckett aesthetic is advertised in the first sentence of *Enough*: 'All that goes before forget'. The new 'art and craft' is much less elaborate and much more rudimentary than the old. Whereas Molloy believed that it was the role of objects to restore silence,[2] the speakers of the 'residua' and 'fizzles' believe that the role of objects is to inspire speech and render speech itself an object of disinterested contemplation. A spare declarative prose, shorn (except in *Imagination dead imagine*, 1965) of the ubiquitous commas that make for rhetoric, occupies the space where turbulence has previously ruled. Linguistic flourishes have been abandoned in favour of a lapidary plainness, quickened where necessary with strange and exquisite cadences. The turbulence and turmoil are on the point of being tamed. But even in these 'residua' Beckett is unable actually to present a text which justifies its surface strangeness. *Enough* (1965) is neither a straightforward narrative nor a sufficiently veiled allegorization of the relationship between voice and being. Its moments of plangency sort oddly with its moments of permutation (later to dominate *Lessness*). *Imagination dead imagine* is a deeply moving text describing how tranquillity may be destroyed by an 'eye of prey' that is left adrift at the end in a welter of speculation, with little prospect of again rediscovering the ordered world he had miraculously perceived. But the variations of tone between lyricism and dryness are not always successfully managed.

In *The Lost Ones* (1966) Beckett avoids the uncertainty generated by the 'eye of prey' by removing the narrator altogether and entrusting the discourse to a studiously impartial observer concerned only to record as accurately as possible the facts of existence within the cylinder. But the world of *The Lost Ones* is one in which the disintegrating tendencies of *Enough* have become universal, with each body 'searching for its lost one' with a restlessness quite alien to the resigned calm of *Enough*, and there is an odd and ultimately wearying disparity between the turbulent events described and the detached tone of the observer which must have had something to do with Beckett being unable to complete the work satisfactorily.

In *Ping* (1966) he more characteristically makes form and content one again, beginning with the assumption that all is known but finding that the murmurs and memories that threaten this security can only be 'whispered down', if at all, by repeated recourse to the 'ping' mechanism from which they appear to emanate. Beckett is obviously striving here to banish murmur and memory once and for all, but finds that there are traces and signs that cannot be made to disappear. *Ping* is brought to a miraculous and welcome halt (less poignant but more agonizing than the erasure device which ends *Enough*), but it is a text that is racked with turmoil, and the 'unlustrous eye' at the end is desolate and 'imploring' rather than calm.

After *Ping* Beckett seems to have reverted to *The Lost*

Ones material in the continuing belief that 'all needed to be known for say is known',[3] and in *Lessness* (1969) made this literally true, by shrinking his world to sixty sentences that can be repeated in infinite combinations. With the 'white blank planes' of *Ping* 'gone from mind' and the 'traces' of time and space that haunted *Ping* seen to be 'figments', the construction of a true refuge a timeless, changeless, infinite existence, becomes a possibility. Only the presence of humanity—the little body persisting in its fruitless quests and endlessly undergoing the rigours of day and night—prevents the establishment of such a refuge. *Lessness* is an attempt to present the dream of changelessness and the reality of change as inextricably bound together; and Beckett is clearly trying to forge a language that will be both fluid and static, plangent and crystalline. In the last analysis, despite its moments of great beauty, it seems a little too much like a stained-glass window. There is an element of rigidity and dessication in the device of permutation that leaves one feeling that the prose has been placed in a straitjacket rather than allowed to flow and find its own natural confines. In 1970 Beckett again reverted to *The Lost Ones* and added a final paragraph to that essentially unfinishable work, describing how 'a last body of all . . . after a pause impossible to time . . . finds at last his place and pose whereupon dark descends'.[4] It is difficult not to believe that he had seen how fraught with problems the ostensibly attractive device of permutation was, and had resolved once again to humanize his approach in an effort to achieve a real, rather than a forced, tranquillity.

Still (1973) is neither clinical like *The Lost Ones* nor confessional like *From an abandoned work*. It lacks the diagnostic spirit of the short texts of the 1960s, but it more than makes up for it by the manner in which it presents experience for its own sake. It is a splendid simulcrum of the mind quietly communing with itself on the subject of something always on the point of being engulfed by the element it inhabits. The stuttering syntax dramatizes the way the eye adapts itself to states of darkness desirable in that they offer a refuge but disturbing in that they are like the darkness of real being. Beckett is admitting here that complete stillness (short of what Mr. Rooney in *All that* *fall* would call 'fully certified death') is impossible to achieve because the mind persists in investigating its perceptions long after the body has ceased to move. The speaker in *Still* has learnt from the mistakes of his predecessors and become less demanding of his surroundings, more content to move slowly between the two positions he especially favours, either seated at the open window facing south or standing by the western window in the gathering gloom. But his mind cannot rest; and the more he concentrates, the more turbulence he uncovers:

> Quite still again then at open window . . . though actually close inspection not still at all but trembling all over. Close inspection namely detail by detail all over to add up to this whole not still at all but trembling all over . . . even the hands clearly trembling and the breast faint rise and fall.[5]

From here on the whole impetus of the text is towards the climactic moment when the head, seeking relief from its distress, reposes in the hand and a stillness of mind and body can be temporarily reconstituted. It is symptomatic of Beckett's new tranquillity that this action is accomplished without any of the urgency or dislocation of earlier texts. At the end of the piece the syntax, momentarily ruffled by the 'trembling', regains the quiet declarative power of the opening sentences:

> All quite still again the head in hand . . . as the hours pass lesser contacts . . . with the faint stirrings of the various points as night wears on. . . . Leave it so all quite still or try listening to the sounds all quite still head in hand listening for a sound.[6]

Still, as its conclusion shows, is a far cry from the wild and whirling words of *Ping*. It is perhaps as subtle and compelling in its language as any of Beckett's most recent prose. It demonstrates at every point that Beckett has surrendered at last to the musical properties inherent in language rather than regarding them as incidental beauties he can well do without. He is said to have relinquished English because he could not help writing poetry in that language, but in returning to English in *Still* he has written a poetic text that far exceeds even the best of his poetic efforts. In this serpentine and, as it were, short-sighted prose, each element seems to blend effortlessly and imperceptibly into the next without Beckett losing the muscular energy that has always been his hall-mark. The concentration on sound patterns—alliteration ('quite quiet', 'western window', 'no more movable imaginable') assonance ('window . . . afterglow', 'closing as it goes', 'normally . . . valley'), near homonyms ('some . . . same', 'head . . . hand'), clusters of consonants ('upright wicker chair with armrests . . . stare', 'no such thing the further shelter')—is achieved without our finding them merely precious or exquisite, and the self-critique that has always been present in Beckett is again at work here keepng the emotions under control. The tendency to write blank verse that surfaced uncomfortably at certain moments in the *Texts for Nothing* is here reserved for the moment of greatest intensity: 'till midway to the head it hesitates / and hangs half open trembling in mid air'; the temptation to take refuge in the extreme form of patterning, permutation (resisted with difficulty in *Enough* and *Ping* and acceded to in *Lessness*) is here cut short with a dismissive 'etc.' at the one point where it threatens to take over the text. If a fascination for repetition remains at the heart of *Still*, it is not because the repeated elements are, as in *Ping*, impedimenta to be circumvented, but because they offer the optimum way of bearing witness to the abiding truth of individual perceptions and expressing the viability of the desire to be still. The atomization of language that occurred in *Ping* has been abandoned in favour of a prose that seems intent on exploring the potentialities of its own idiosyncratic syntax. Beckett avoids excessive pathos and excessive dryness by finding at last the 'syntax of weakness' which he spoke about in 1962,[7] a syntax that operates on our sensibilities by insinuation rather than assertion, by its infinite suggestibility rather than by its vehement rigour.

Still, like all great literature (and unlike *Ping*), creates the taste by which it is to be enjoyed. It is the most approachable and satisfying of Beckett's prose texts since *How it is*. It does not require of a reader that he should be familiar with every other item in Beckett's *œuvre*; it only requires him to keep his sensibility, in particular his aural sensibility, receptive. It is true that anyone who knows their Beckett well will be reminded, at the beginning of *Still*, that the sudden brightness before sunset is a phenomenon to which Beckett has alluded before, in *From an abandoned work*:

> Nice fresh morning, bright too early as so often. . . . The sky would soon darken and rain fall and go on falling, all day, till evening. Then blue and sun again a second, then night.

and in the splendid opening of *Watt* (which also describes Mr. Hackett feeling the arm-rests of 'his' seat in the manner of the speaker of *Still*):

> These northwestern skies are really extraordinary, said Goff, are they not.
>
> So voluptuous, said Tetty. You think it is all over and then pop! up they flare, with augmented radiance.

Likewise, anyone who has relished the memorable opening of *Murphy*, with the eponymous hero strapped in his wicker-chair gazing out of the window, can hardly fail to observe the connection between *Murphy* and the situation described in *Still*. There is also a close verbal connection between the conclusion of *Still* ('Leave it so . . .') and the beginning of the third of the *Texts for Nothing* ('Leave all that, I was going to say leave all that . . . '). But none of these analogues are essential to the comprehension of *Still*, except insofar as they serve to confirm one's feeling that Beckett has become less tormented and less violent in forty years of writing. *Still*'s ability to hold us spellbound derives directly from its containing within itself the reasons why it is so and not otherwise.

Still is certainly the nearest Beckett has come to the condition of tranquillity he has been seeking for so long. *For to end yet again* is a much more turbulent text, as is only to be expected of a piece that finds it necessary to return to the landscape of ruins and the vain 'dream of a way in space with neither here nor there'. It is indeed characteristic of Beckett's restlessness and his refusal to be seduced by his own imaginings that in the texts which immediately followed *Still*, the unpublished 'Sounds' and 'Still 3', printed for the first time in the appendix to this article, we should see Beckett subjecting his new language to the kinds of strain we normally associate with him.

In 'Sounds' the speaker is listening for a sound not because he hopes for something from it (as in *How it is*) but rather because he wishes to devise a strategy for abolishing its existence. If he can establish the total absence of sound, as in *Still* he has established the total absence of vision, he will be able to convince himself that he has effectively ceased to exist, that he has been 'dreamt away'.[8] As in *Still*, Beckett is torn between the belief that he has achieved his desired aim and a troubled awareness that he has not done so:

> But mostly not for nothing never quite for nothing[9] even stillest night when air too still for even the lightest leaf to carry to sound no not to sound to carry too still for even the lightest leaf to carry the brief way here and not die the sound not die on the brief way the wave not die away. . . .

The curious interlude that follows this admission, describing how the figure leaves the summerhouse and goes out to a tree (doubtless the beech tree 'in whose shade' the speaker of *Still* was 'once quite still'), dramatizes how precarious and short-lived the stasis of *Still* can be. But 'Sounds' reaffirms Beckett's belief in the possibility of stillness and stasis in its third and final section,[10] which returns us to the refuge of the summerhouse and concentrates on the most decisive proof of all that the speaker has not been 'dreamt away'—the phenomenon of breathing:

> Sigh it all out through the mouth that sound then fill again hold and out again so often once sigh upon sigh no question now some time past but quiet as when even the mother can't hear stooped over the crib but has to feel pulse or heart.

It is a moment of great tenderness, like that describing the mother crouched over the praying boy of *How it is*, or the conclusion of the first of the *Texts for Nothing*. It is more poignant even than the moment in *Still* when the narrator perceives the 'faint rise and fall' of his breast. Beckett seems to have realized sometime in the late 1960s (when he composed *Breath*) that the sound of breathing was an even more important matter than the sound of voices. But whereas *Breath* concentrated on the insistent presence of life, 'Sounds' manages to convince us of the almost total absence of life:

> Leave it so then this stillest night till now of all quite still head in hand as shown listening for a sound or dreamt away try dreamt away where no such thing no more than ghosts make nothing to listen for no such thing as a sound.

The extreme quietness of this conclusion, largely a matter (as in *Still*) of syntactical poise and adroit management of cadence, convinces us that tranquillity can be reconstituted, even after the body has felt compelled to leave its refuge. If it is true, as the narrator assures us, that 'worse than none the self's when the whole body moves', we can content ourselves by reflecting that when the body is once again still the true void of the self can be intuited and communicated.

The very brief 'Still 3' returns us to the wicker-chair of *Still* and shows Beckett following the premisses of *Still* and 'Sounds' through to their conclusions. All activity has ceased, all inquiry has been abandoned, all categories have been destroyed:

> not listening again in vain quite yet while the dim questions fade where been how long how it was. For head in hand eyes closed as shown always the same dark now from all hours of day and night. No nightbird to mean night at least day at least or so faint perhaps mere fancy. . . . Or Mother Calvet[11] with the dawn pushing the old go-cart for whatever she might find and back at dusk. Back then and nothing to tell but some soundless place and in the head. . . .

It would seem, as much from the tone of what the speaker says as from the utterances themselves, that the protagonist has reached a more complete and fulfilling absence than was possible in either of the previous *Still* texts. But at this point he finds that the problem of the imagination has not been solved so much as shelved. The second half of 'Still 3' presents the turbulent world of the imagination, as agonized and fragmentary as the world Beckett dramatized in *Play* (1963):

> ... faces on off in the dark sudden whites long short then black long short then another so on or the same.

Faced with this unexpected horror Beckett tries at once to apply the wisdom of stillness discovered in *Still* and 'Sounds': 'say back try saying back from there head in hand as shown'. But all he can accomplish in 'Still 3' is the perception of a figure mummified to the point of disappearance:

> Size as seen in the life at say arm's length sudden white black all about no known expression eyes its at last not looking lips the ones no expression marble still so long then out.

It clearly gives the speaker considerable satisfaction that this mummified figure possesses a life and features that are nothing to do with him. But perhaps his greatest satisfaction derives from the fact that the tranquillity achieved in *Still* and 'Sounds' has been shown to be possible even in the world of the imagination.

'Sounds' and 'Still 3' are clearly of a piece with *Still* in the way they re-establish tranquillity when tranquillity has been seriously threatened. But in the two unpublished texts the surface of the prose is much more ruffled by the turbulence it throws up, and *For to end yet again* is more turbulent still.[12] In each case Beckett adapts his 'syntax of weakness' in the light of new aims and new problems, but perhaps only in *Still* can he be said to have found the calm he has spent a lifetime searching for.

University of Reading

NOTES

[1] See my '*Dream of Fair to Middling Women* Revisited' in *Frescoes of the Skull* (forthcoming).

[2] *Molloy* in *Three Novels*, London, 1959, pp. 13–14.

[3] 'Closed Space' in *For to end yet again and other fizzles*, London, 1976, p. 49.

[4] *The Lost Ones*, London, 1972, pp. 60, 62.

[5] *For to end yet again*, pp. 19–20.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[7] The private letter in which Beckett uses this phrase is quoted from by Lawrence Harvey in his *Samuel Beckett: Poet and Critic*, Princeton, 1970.

[8] The description of the 'dreaming back' situation in Yeats's *A Vision* hardly illuminates 'Sounds', but must have been known to Beckett, who knows Yeats well, as the recent television play '. . . *but the clouds*' (a quotation from the conclusion to Yeats's poem 'The Tower') reminds us.

[9] Clearly an oblique critique of the *Texts for Nothing.*

[10] The holograph mss. show that Beckett conceived the piece in three sections and then conflated them.

[11] A figure also mentioned in the second of the *Texts for Nothing.*

[12] See my 'Beckett after *Still*' in *Romance Notes*, Autumn 1977, and also my review-article of the 'fizzles' in *Journal of Beckett Studies*, No. 2, Summer 1977.

Appendix

The texts of 'Sounds' and 'Still 3' are reprinted from MSS. 1396/4/50 and 1396/4/52 in the Beckett Archive of the University of Reading. They date from May and June, 1973. The editors of Essays in Criticism *join me in thanking Mr. Beckett for his generosity in making these texts available.*

SOUNDS

Sounds then even stillest night here where none come some time past mostly no want no not no want but never none of any kind even stillest night seldom an hour another hour but some sound of some kind here where none come none pass even the nightbirds some time past in such numbers once such numbers. Or if none hour after hour no sound of any kind then he having been dreamt away let himself be dreamt away to where none at any time away from here where none come none pass to where no sound at any time no sound to listen for none of any kind. But mostly not for nothing never quite for nothing even stillest night when air too still for even the lightest leaf to sound no not to sound to carry too still for even the lightest leaf to carry the brief way here and not die the sound not die on the brief way the wave not die away. For catch up the torch and out up the path all overgrown now as more than once he must up suddenly out of the chair and out up the path by the torchlight and still no sound from the tree till nearly there when switch out and stand beneath or with his arms round it certain moods and head against the bark as if a human. Then back when enough some nights only after hours switch on and back in silence no sooner in the clear open back down the path by the torchlight as before and no sound but worse than none his feet among the weeds till back in the chair quite still as before. For clearly worse than none the self's when the whole body moves from its place as to those leaves then or some part or parts leaving the main unmoved or even at its most still as now all outwardly at rest head in hand listening trying listening for a sound. Head in hand as shown from when hand rose from rest to new pose at rest on elbow all silent the whole change so worse than none the self's as silent as if none save one faint at the end the faint creak as it gave the wicker made. Start up now snatching up the torch and out up the path no question some time past even stillest night but rather no sound hour after hour or be dreamt away better still dreamt away where no sound to listen for no more than ghosts make or motes in the sun. Room too quite still some time past and loft where such sounds once all night there by open window eyes closed or looking out never an hour but suddenly some sound room or loft low and brief never twice quite the same to wonder over a moment no longer now. Even the wind some time past so often once so loud certain nights he could pace to and fro and no more sound than a ghost or mutter old words once got by heart the very wind as though no more air to move no more than in a void. Breath itself sigh it all out through the mouth that sound then fill again hold and out again so often once sigh upon sigh no question now some time past but quiet as when even the mother can't hear stooped over the crib but has to feel pulse or heart. Leave it so then this stillest night till now of all quite still head in hand as shown listening trying listening for a sound or dreamt away try dreamt away where no such thing no more than ghosts make nothing to listen for no such thing as a sound.

STILL 3

Whence when back no knowing where no telling where been how long how it was. Back in the chair at the window before the window head in hand as shown dead still listening again in vain. No not yet not listening again in vain quite yet while the dim questions fade where been how long how it was. For head in hand eyes closed as shown always the same dark now from now all hours of day and night. No nightbird to mean night at least or day at least so faint perhaps mere fancy with the right valley wind the incarnation bell. Or Mother Calvet with the dawn pushing the old go-cart for whatever she might find and back at dusk. Back then and nothing to tell but some soundless place and in the head in the hand where such questions once like ghosts where what how long weirdest of all. Till in imagination from the dead faces faces on off in the dark sudden whites long short then black long short then another so on or the same. White stills all front no expression eyes wide unseeing mouth no expression male female all ages one by one never more at a time. There somewhere some time hers or his or some other creature's try dreamt away saying dreamt away where face after face till hers in the end or his or that other creature's. Where faces in the dark as shown for one in the end even though only once only for a second say back try saying back from there head in hand as shown. For one or more why while at it one alone no one alone one by one none it till perhaps some time in the end that one or none. Size as seen in the life at say arm's length sudden white black all about no known expression eyes its at last not looking lips the ones no expression marble still so long then out.

Copyright © Samuel Beckett 1977.

Book Reviews

Propertius. By MARGARET HUBBARD. Duckworth, 1974; £6.50.

Propertius: A Critical Introduction. By J. P. SULLIVAN. Cambridge University Press, 1976; £6.95.

Obviously it helps to know Latin if one wants first-hand experience of Latin poetry, but a conventional training in classics is a calamity that a student has to recover from if literary appreciation is to begin. This paradox has its hopeful side in the present precarious state of classical studies. As the number of pupils studying Latin steadily drops, and the audience of those committed in some way to the study of the classics shrinks, the task of reaching a different kind of audience becomes more urgent. This task can be seen in two ways. If it is regarded as mere popularizing, it seems demoralizing, a prostitution of the subject to the market place. But this new audience need not be regarded as simply inferior to the old audience. Ignorance of Latin does not guarantee a general cultural inferiority, any more than knowledge of Latin guarantees anything more than knowledge of Latin. The 'general reader' Latinists ought to aim at might be widely read and well-informed in precisely those areas where traditionally classicists have been inadequate. The demands of such a general reader would be a challenge of the most invigorating kind, what classics would need even if Latin studies was not in its present parlous state.

Propertius, a major poet whose name does not have the currency of Vergil or Horace, is a good test case. He is the subject of two recent books, both introductions. Miss Hubbard's *Propertius* shows both the hopeful and the less than hopeful aspects of the state of classics. Her adequacy as a literary critic seems no greater than could be expected from a product of a classical education. However, in the process of giving the kind of background that the general reader needs, she recreates Propertius's literary and social situation with shrewdness and common sense, and occasionally with convincing insight into the problems an artist like Propertius would have faced in a Rome under Augustus's rule.

Unfortunately she makes literary insensitivity into a basic premise of her criticism. Her main target is the view that Propertius has qualities which especially appeal to modern readers of modern poetry: 'the sudden transitions, the allusiveness, the tortured syntax, are features of our modern poetry' in Wilkinson's words, which she quotes disapprovingly on page 1. Firstly she wants to claim that such a judgment is completely anachronistic. Her evidence, however, is incredibly flimsy: three adjectives from Ovid, a half-clause from Quintillian contentiously re-interpreted, and a sentence from the younger Pliny, writing a hundred years later, and not even directly about Propertius, but about Passenus Paullus, a poet who claimed descent from Propertius.

If none of the poetry had survived, we might have had to accept inferences from such scanty and indirect evidence. But fortunately the poetry has survived. In face of this, Miss Hubbard launches the second, more dangerous prong of her argument. She sets up an either-or: 'Ancient criticism knows no dissent from this verdict; it valued in Propertius not an obscure master of the passions, but a poet of finish, grace and charm'. So that if the text seems difficult, the text must be corrupt, not giving us the finished, graceful, charming poem Propertius must have written. This is a dangerous assumption if it gets into the wrong hands. It licences an editor to bowdlerize a wayward poet, to trim him down by conventional standards of logic and decorum. A. E. Housman is Miss Hubbard's model here. Bentley on Milton would have provided another well-known instance of the method. But Bentley and Housman managed to give perceptive criticism of the text before they altered it, because their absolute demand for logic located shifts of thought, 'sudden transitions', which had not been noticed before. A demand for grace and charm is less likely to be revealing.

There are undoubtedly problems with Propertius's text at a number of points, and emendations have been suggested for centuries. However, in many cases problems which moved earlier scholars to emend the text have recently received elegant and satisfying explanations on poetic grounds: the 'sudden transitions' again. Ironically, in spite of her opening coat-trailing, Miss Hubbard in practice is basically on the side of the textual conservatives. In the poems which she discusses she suggests no emendations of her own, and she makes a point of justifying the received text on a number of occasions, usually convincingly. Her second chapter, which is the one most concerned with such problems, handles the problem of the unity of some of Propertius's poems in an eminently flexible and intelligent way, arguing for the basic coherence and integrity of poems which other editors have split up into three, four or more separate fragments.

Even so, she never rises above the self-imposed limitations of her opening judgment. The critic can bowdlerize much more effectively than the textual scholar. Since Miss Hubbard is reluctant to acknowledge anything much stronger than grace or at most wit, she leaves out of her account whole areas of experience which are central to Propertius, and the poems or parts of poems in which they are located. Propertius's first books of poems, the *Monobiblos*, made his reputation and is still the most accessible of his works. Miss Hubbard's chapter on it, which ought to have been the easiest to write, is significantly the weakest in the book.

She starts with poem one, a natural place to start, quoting and translating the whole poem. So far so good. But the discussion that follows is a fragmentary affair, one paragraph dealing with the probable source for the first five lines, another one glossing an allusion (misleadingly, as it happens), then some plot-summary, rendered redundant by her translation, then a few blows directed at some misguided emenders, and finally a generalization about Greek epigram and Latin elegy. Entirely missing is any sense that this is a difficult, problematic poem, whose power comes partly from its being incompletely public, not fully brought out into the light of day. Miss Hubbard's translation into lucid prose is not silly, but is only one attempt at a difficult text, which may give those whose Latin is not strong the impression that their difficulties must be due to their own incompetence. Propertius in this poem at least is an 'obscure master of the passions', or a slave, to use a metaphor that occurs in the poem itself.

One service she could have performed would have been to gloss some of Propertius's allusions to myth, to show how the allusive process works, how Propertius's imagination made use of the world of myth. She does discuss one allusion in poem one, to Milanion's conquest of Atalanta, who is referred to only as the daughter of Jasus. For Miss Hubbard, the myth has only a decorative function: 'Cynthia was not especially like Atalanta, whose name is left to be guessed (it is enough that she was cruel and hard-hearted, though the informed reader may get an extra savour from being reminded that she was the daughter of Jasus and swift of foot).' But the informed reader of Propertius should be alert for more than such 'savour'. The reference to Atalanta's speed of foot has considerable point. In the poem, Propertius seems to be invoking a version of the Atalanta myth in which Milanion won her by mere devotion: 'So great is the power of prayer and services in love' (line 16). Only the single adjective *velocem* shows that Propertius knew what the traditional story said: that Milanion won Atalanta by scattering golden balls in her path, which distracted her and caused her to lose the race against him. So it was not 'prayers and services' that won her, but her greed for gold. The allusion has considerable point for Propertius, who is always accusing Cynthia of whoring after rich lovers. The world of myth in Propertius is generally like this, not an ideal world of virtuous and honourable lovers, but a splendid world where lust, violence and duplicity flourished on a heroic scale. Although Miss Hubbard has given the general reader more classical precedents and scholarly disputes than he could easily assimilate (at least she does not despise his intelligence) she has given him very little help in coming to terms with qualities of language or with how the poetry works.

She is much more impressive on Propertius's later work, and her most interesting chapter deals with Propertius's attempts to write a more public kind of poetry: 'The Quest for Callimachus'. In this chapter her wide knowledge of classical literature and her less extensive knowledge of Roman life are brought to bear in a fascinating attempt to recreate Propertius's situation as an artist in the middle phase of his career. She discusses other poets, notably

Horace and Ovid, in some detail, pointing out the kind of integrity that prevented Propertius from matching their kind of success, and the different kind of virtues Propertius was able to display. She seems slightly to prefer the other two poets, but remains eminently judicious. The discussions of Propertius's contemporaries and predecessors are much more focussed than in the earlier chapters, where Miss Hubbard tended to take a God's eye view (or a classical scholar's) of her material. Here she looks at it with an acute eye for the problems and possibilities such poetry would have presented to a man like Propertius, locating him precisely in the social hierarchy, part of the Italian aristocracy which maintained some distance from the official establishment of the Augustan régime, a distance which proved increasingly difficult to sustain.

Since this is obviously her strength as a critic, it is a pity she did not bring a similar approach to the earlier poems. She makes a few gestures in the right direction, for instance the observation that 'elegy presents us with a pair of lovers in an intellectual and social context, defined by contrasts real and ideal, assailable by classes of people imagined or actual', but this kind of awareness never informs her criticism of the less public poetry. In spite of Cynthia's importance in Propertius's poetry, Miss Hubbard does not even speculate about her social status. Her good manners again, perhaps. It used to be assumed that Cynthia was the pseudonym for a high class courtesan named Hostia. Recently Gordon Williams has argued persuasively that Hostia was more probably a married woman. Propertius announces in his first poem that his relationship was subversive of Roman social norms. It matters greatly which norms it offended against, and whether Cynthia socially was unreachably above him or below. For instance Propertius often accuses her of behaving like a prostitute. If she really was one, this would be merely a recognition of the fact, but if she was not, it serves an entirely different function.

Sullivan's *Propertius* provides a neat contrast to Miss Hubbard's in many important respects. He has previously written a book on Pound and Propertius whose polemical point was the need to supplement the knowledge of a scholar with the insight of a reader and practitioner of poetry. His tone suggests that he enjoys and values Propertius. He does not, as Miss Hubbard does, struggle against the critical preoccupations and values which have made Propertius seem an especially interesting and 'modern' poet. These are essential qualities for someone introducing a poet to an indifferent and unpersuaded audience, and they make Sullivan's a better first book to read on Propertius than Miss Hubbard's.

Regrettably it is not well put together as a book. It is poorly organized, sometimes repetitious, uneven in level and tone, eclectic in modes of criticism. Such faults make it a less satisfactory introductory text. More worryingly, they cast doubt on the worth of the book's aims, since they will tend to confirm a classicist's prejudices against a study with the ambition of Sullivan's. The casual style might seem to argue a deeper indifference to logic and precise grasp of detail, virtues which a classical education was once supposed to foster.

But Sullivan is trying to do two important things in his book, both of which are far from incompatible with concern for logic and precise grasp of detail. He wants to call on a wide range of classical and non-classical literature, and an enlarged sense of the possibilities of literature that many centuries of criticism have made available to students of the classics. He also, more contentiously, wants to bring the poetry into contact with political and social experience, modern and Augustan. He does this far more directly than Miss Hubbard, and discusses the major poems to Cynthia as well as the more obviously political poems in his chapter on 'the Politics of Elegy'.

There are well-known dangers in this kind of approach that he does not try to avoid. The analogies between present and past come too quickly to illuminate either period, the short-hand suggesting that historical and social processes are well known or easy to grasp. The writer of an introduction has a difficult job here, because the basic work has to be done as well as introduced. But Sullivan may not have sufficient sense of the difficulty of the task if it is to be done properly. Symptomatically, there is only one historian in his bibliography of 125 items, and no political theorist.

Sullivan's book is also disappointing in the quality of its local criticism. He offers little in the way of judgment or elucidation, nothing to suggest to the reader the rewards for acquiring a grasp of the Latin of the text. Like Hubbard he generally works with long passages of Latin with a prose translation immediately following, with transcription and translation doing most of the work of commentary. Sometimes he uses a Pound version of the passage, and Pound also provides most of his critical judgments and even terminology. But Pound has not been assimilated or embodied in fresh perceptions of the poetry. For instance, Pound's term 'logopoeia' ('the dance of the intellect upon words') is used to sum up Propertius's quality in his later poetry, but the claim surely has to be proved through a close reading that explores the play of intellect on particular words: a reading that would also be an invaluable way of showing exactly how Propertius's poetry works. Sullivan illustrates the term with IV 8, an eminently suitable choice. He quotes and translates three-quarters of this 88-line poem, a sufficient sample for a reader who is at home with Latin poetry, but presumably more help is needed by the general reader. Sullivan's commentary, however, is brief and banal, more concerned with summary of content than with 'the dance of the intellect' or any other qualities of form. The translations are little help: at best accurate enough, with colloquial freedom an unsatisfactory substitute for the vitality of the original, but at worst seeming to miss Propertius's point entirely. For instance he quotes lines about two girls used by Propertius as temporary substitutes for Cynthia: Phyllis

> sobria grata parum: cum bibit, omne decet

and Teia:

> candida, sed potae non satis unus erit.

He translates the first of these 'when sober, not too attractive; when she drinks, everything is right', and the second 'nice white skin, but in her cups one man isn't enough for her'. *Candida* can refer to white skin, but the point of the line here is Teia's purity when sober in contrast (*sed*) with her drunken promiscuity. Similarly, Phyllis's change when drunk is not to become attractive, but to become available; *grata* more usually means pleasing but can also mean giving favours. The ambiguity here establishes a reciprocity between desire and desirability: *her* drunkenness alters *his* perception, contrary to normal assumptions about the effects of alcohol. Is this 'logopoeia'? To decide would require a more accurate grasp of the possibilities of the language than Sullivan seems to display, in translations or comments.

So his discussion of the poetry proceeds by methods similar to Miss Hubbard's: extensive quotation, redundant summary of the content, and abundance of parallels. Where they are engaging directly with the text, the most basic activity for a critic, it seems that the neat antithesis between Sullivan and Hubbard breaks down. They are equally inadequate as readers of poetry, in similar ways. Propertius still waits for a critic to introduce him, to classicists as well as to the general reader. Even the right orientation will not suffice: though better a right orientation than a misguided one.

Murdoch University
Western Australia

R. I. V. HODGE

STAGE-CENTERED CRITICISM

The Shakespeare Revolution. Criticism and Performance in the Twentieth Century. By. J. L. STYAN. Cambridge University Press, 1977; £6.50.

'It is a growing voice which urges that criticism which ignores the theatrical experience is peripheral, even irresponsible.' So ended one of Professor Styan's previous seven books which, with this latest, make him the most vigorous voice in the chorus.

Much of his vigour has gone into the prior argument against criticism which ignores the *dramatic* experience. A play is a sequence: avoid distant aerial photos, record our journey over its varied terrain, and we will have more chance of escaping what D. J. Enright called 'the hygienic incinerators of symbolism, imagery-computation [and] curiously trite moralizing'. And a play is not a lyric: its words form speech, and they signal gesture, action and scene. Both truisms, but you might not think so from the average book or class. So we need the vigour of a book like *Shakespeare's Stagecraft* (1967; hereafter *SS*), which briskly collects a hundred or so points of dramatic art, few discoveries of Styan's but all made more vivid to spectator or to reader. But with *Drama, Stage and Audience* (1975; hereafter *DS & A*) vigour means a strident and polemical voice, which claims an absolute split between spectator and 'mere' reader, between dramatic performance in the 'live' theatre and in the inner theatre of the mind. And this claim cannot be supported by the examples in Styan's books, or by an appeal to experience, or by a reminder of the best of past Shakespeare criticism.

An example small but dear to the theatre chorus—it comes on the first page of *DS & A* and returns on pp. 5, 27 and 40—is Hamlet's inky cloak. Yes, we must see it. But that the reader's mind's eye is unlikely to miss it is unwittingly granted in the other point, that this prop is 'signalled' in the words. Yes, inattentive readers may miss it, but so may inattentive spectators. And a good reader will feel how the idea of signalling, and the object signalled, doesn't exhaust the effect of the phrase 'inky cloak' and surrounding words. The more open-minded *SS* acknowledges this, commenting for instance on how the passage on dawn in *Romeo and Juliet*, III. 5, is much more than a signal to the lights-man and/or the mind's eye: the source-lines in Brooke's poem would have done for that. That audiences see the cloak whereas readers 'see' or imagine it, is less important than that (unless the lights-man is allowed to dominate), audiences like readers 'see' or imagine the dawn.

Does one approach certainly lead where another can't? Or does the best criticism follow one approach? An essay working hard at ultimate significance can nevertheless dwell on Autolycus, and his 'supremely satisfying' play with the Clown, 'crying out for stage-realization' (Wilson Knight's *Crown of Life*). An account of atmosphere and imagery can include action and stageing; can point out that 'the witches . . . have hardly quitted the stage when there staggers onto it a "bloody man" gashed with wounds'. When Styan measures it from side to side and rephrases Bradley thus: 'as they vanish through their trap, the captain has staggered his thirty feet down to the centre of the house', nothing is added to the appreciation of drama as distinct from the history of theatre. (*DS & A* repeatedly makes this seem the real distinction or split; as do many so-called departments of drama.) And while closet-critics can adjust to a stage-centred focus, theatrical critics are not immune from the academic and undramatic; as when the witches' first scene 'provokes the strongest idea of upsetting the natural order'. (The reader could go further, as I did but have no space for: compare the accounts, in several of Styan's books, of episodes from *Macbeth* and *The Winter's Tale* with Bradley and Wilson Knight respectively: both similarities and differences prompt thoughts about Styan's theory of drama criticism. I suggest this not to promote a three-cornered sledgehammers-nut fight but because the parallels are especially remarkable.

Two passages have long been valued as full accounts of dramatic effect which don't suffer by not being explicitly theatrical, covering mental and 'live' performances: Coleridge on the opening of *Hamlet*; and Johnson on *Lear*'s involutions and oppositions, hurrying current and 'perpetual tumult of indignation, pity, and hope'. But 'pain, disgust and indignation' (Coleridge's words) were what both usually felt in the theatre, and this for Styan *ipso facto* crippled their appreciation of drama. Has Styan's case—in this new book historically projected, with Coleridge and the theatre of Coleridge's time as parallel starting-points—more demonstration than ideology?

The historical case is: that criticism ('the closet') and the theatre need each other; that 150 or so years ago they mainly ignored each other, to mutual cost; that the greatest later advances in understanding Shakespeare came from stage experiments with the finds and guesses of scholars (with Granville-Barker the ideal scholar-critic-director); and that, with Guthrie and Brook building on these, 'scholarship [and criticism—the book often blurs them] seems suspect and the stage seems more in touch with [the plays'] spirit'.

The book keeps as alternating but separate strands the histories of stage and closet, and the case runs into problems when we draw these closer. For a start, we are told with equal vigour that Coleridge culpably held the contemporary theatre in contempt, and also that the contemporary and Victorian theatre was indeed contemptible. And it is pious rather than realistic to say he should have worked harder to change the theatre rather than carped and crept back into the closet. Think of his lectures and audiences against the monopolistic commercial machines of the Regency theatre world, and it is more surprising what, by Styan's own account, Coleridge did do: by mid-nineteenth century his voice counted in 'the swelling chorus against misplaced illusion', theatres aimed at 'a new, Coleridgean standard of the play's poetic unity', and thanks largely to him audiences heard 'more of Shakespeare's words' (which, with the restoration of the Fool and the end to *Lear*, or of Lady Macduff, is putting it mildly).

Styan believes Coleridge could not give a radical lead because he could conceive no alternative to the representational stage. But even the bare phrase cited—'a naked room, a blanket for a curtain'—shows he could. And could conceive of its use: the context is not distaste for it but admiration for Shakespeare's use of it. While he over-estimated its bareness, he often stressed it wasn't a bad job to be made the best of, but one of Shakespeare's main advantages. (The matter is often linked to Coleridge's thoughts about the unities and dramatic illusion. Styan forgets these, and Bradley's attacks on misplaced illusion, when he brands closet-critics as realism-lovers). It made dramatist and actors appeal to the imaginations of an audience. It gave him 'a power over space and time'. And 'no scenes', stressed Coleridge (like Bradley); no hard scene-divisions, let alone elaborate scenic effects and consequent scene-changes with pauses or even re-arrangements. Coleridge saw that nothing in Shakespeare's day would have interrupted what Styan now shows that the 'live' theatre didn't start to recover until the 1880s: 'The pace, sweep and rhythm of continuous action possible on a bare platform.' At risk of straying into the realm of 'Do we dream in colour?' it seems clear that while Coleridge saw Shakespeare in the theatre of the mind, that theatre had an Open Stage. (For quick directions to relevant passages, see 'stage' in the index to the Penguin *Coleridge on Shakespeare*.)

From Coleridge, Styan's history moves with élan through the 'mushroom growth' of Shakespeare societies, 'prodigious industry', of scholars like Fleay, and Poel, 'warming to his task, giving 'his ideas full rein' with the Elizabethan Stage Society founded in 1893. Poel's, and later Granville-Barker's, essays at simplicity, intimacy, continuity and non-realism are of course set against the spectaculars of Charles Kean and Tree. All this is familiar. Sidney Lee in 1904 and Bradley in 1909 attacked Victorian production and praised Poel, very much in Styan's terms. Wilson Knight's (*Principles of*) *Shakespearian Production* showed implicitly forty years ago and said explicitly in the 1949 version that 'we need not expend labour' on the 'grave dangers' of Tree; 'the issues are known and have, if only provisionally, been settled'. So Styan's élan here ('resplendent—imposing—magnificent—frantic dancers—surpassing beauty—rare display—sensational storm', he sneers on p. 85) is redundant. It is also dangerous as it betrays a comfortable and closed attitude. Wilson Knight's book attempts the more difficult thing, to rise above the *zeitgeist* and be alert to contemporary versions of the perennial vices which we see with more ease, and ease of mind, in their past forms. 'Much of what was . . . best in Poel and Barker has been assimilated, but . . . the challenges of Tree and Craig still face us'; and his discrimination is much more balanced and searching both within and between each of the quartet. He substantiates a claim for genius in Tree's character, in his handling of a company and in his protean voice and physique (questions of acting, never mind of genius, don't arise in Styan on Tree. For that matter, they hardly arise in the whole book). His phrase 'spiritualized showmanship' for Tree points to realism's vices but also to realism at the service of 'the more numinous elements' and the human grandeur and heightened life that Wilson Knight, although admiring him generously, thought Barker in common with many producers wasn't up to, indeed didn't hold with. Whereas Wilson Knight anticipates Styan on Tree, Styan's eulogy of Barker doesn't answer Wilson Knight's several points of substance. (See also Wilson Knight's most recent thoughts in the Appendix to his *Shakespeare's Dramatic Challenge*, 1977.)

I am not concerned to laud Wilson Knight's book over

Styan's but am considering what it would be to advance our thoughts on the subject they largely share. And a radical weakness of Styan is suggested by an outburst of Craig's, quoted by Wilson Knight, against 'the over-confident superiority of a would-be disciple': no safe way forward can come from incurious contempt for past ways. If such curiosity didn't prompt the revival of neglected powers, it would at least sharpen the recognition of old vices in modern disguise. For lack of it, Styan still exhales the *zeitgeist* of decades ago on Tree *et al*. and on our contemporaries he may be felt in several decades' time to be similarly subject to the *zeitgeist* of the 1970s.

But before moving on to Brook I must raise a general problem that Styan never acknowledges: whilst past criticism is as permanently accessible at first hand as the plays (alright, blueprints), most performances can be reached only by hearsay. We often hear at third-hand; it's not Styan's fault that he like we that are young shall never see so much, but it's Wilson Knight's great advantage that he saw the leading figures right back to Tree whereas Styan has to rely on witnesses, photos and statements of directoral good intentions. What puzzles me is that I can't tell whether Styan attended *recent* productions, including those of Brook with which his book and case culminate. Compare him and Wilson Knight on Brook's *Lear*: why rely so much on witnesses who largely give ecstatic summaries, and who belong to the theatre world? (The 'highly respected' critics who 'joined in' a 'chorus of praise' are Tynan, Hope-Wallace and W. A. Darlington, and what is quoted leaves the hearsay at billboard level: A REVELATION!—Tynan. SHATTERING!—*Telegraph*.) And why rely on the pitiful meagreness of what can be scraped from prompt books and the like, about actors' intentions rather than their performances?

If Styan, despite his declarations that the life of the theatre depends on the spontaneous and unpredictable, concentrates on directoral intentions and on controllable aspects like set-design, lighting-plan and drilled movements; and if J. R. Brown is right that Brook, despite *his* declarations about spontaneity, precludes it by his initial dictating ideas; then Styan's praise of Brook is bound to look circular and *zeitgeist*-born. Brown's *Free Shakespeare*, a valuable attempt to see our age in perspective, giving reasons to believe we are as far as Tree was from adequate or Elizabethan performance—has radical criticisms of Brook that Styan makes too light of. I have seen only the 1970 *Dream* and the film of *Lear*, but by Styan's own descriptions I would criticize Brook less for strangling with ideas than for using ideas that merely exaggerate *ad absurdum* valid as well as familiar aspects or half-truths. So the *Dream* naggingly pressed the renunciation of stage-illusion, over-insisting this was only a play being put on, and breaking down the gap between actors and the audience whom they ended by shaking hands with—'it was the audience's triumph they wished to share'. The idea for the *Lear* is attributed to Kott—Styan shows how widely the 'live' theatre seized on this vulgarizer—who reduced to the absurd in another sense than he knew that aspect best written about by Wilson Knight, who as often was stressing a half-truth to correct the balance. Brook's *reductio* meant playing down Cordelia and not playing at all Edmund's repentance or the servants who soothe Gloucester's sockets and our nerves.

The roughhouse of I.4 was perhaps an exaggeration; but with Tynan calling it 'a revelation' I would rather stress that critics have long considered the possibility of a version like Brook's in the absence of explicit and the uncertainty of implicit stage-directions. Bradley's misgivings about Cordelia's plainness, which amplify a remark by Coleridge, are well-known; but he also suggests the inevitability of a largely critical view of Kent's bluntness—this Tynan found another revelation. (Incidentally the response of critics outside the theatre-review circle casts doubt on Styan's claim that stage has led closet in the 60s and 70s. He speaks of 'the embarrassment of teachers: scholarly criticism was at odds with aesthetic acclaim'. But such criticism, some of which he quotes, must have prompted the major changes in the film version, which Styan doesn't mention. Was there a similar reason for the changes between Stratford and London in the Nunn–Williamson *Macbeth*?) And even a reader who hadn't ventured past the first page of Wilson Knight on *Measure for Measure* might venture to say he has already heard Brook's discovery that 'without being realistic', the action was 'rooted in a very real world'. Brook's originality was to exaggerate the 'disgusting, stinking' side of Viennese life and savageness of Viennese justice. Readers must always have felt the series of pauses before Isabella pleads for Angelo, and R. W. Chambers wrote well of it earlier this century: Brook's originality was to narrow down to the final pause and protract it *ad nauseam.*

Styan is clearly one of a chorus on Brook's 'hunt for the "inner vision" of a play' (213; 'the most visionary director', *DS & A* 31; 'the most piercing director', J. C. Trewin's *Shakespeare on English Stage 1900–64*, p. 249; 'cuts through the play like a laser', *Observer* review quoted by J. R. Brown). It is less clear how he reconciles this with his distrust of aerial photos or x-rays in general and of Wilson Knight's interpretations in particular. The latter's 'inspirational, impulsive visions' first sound like more 'Victorian transcendental fog', but at the end come hints at parallels with, even influence on, the visionary Brook; so between comes a section that is a classic of bet-hedging: 'For all the obscurity of Knight's thinking, its fever was infectious, and few judges would deny him his place as the most disturbing and seductive critic of recent years. For those who searched for a pattern for the understanding of Shakespeare, he supplied one.' Disinterested thought on the general issue comes second to sheer love of the theatre, and to sheer listlessness towards closet-critics.

I shall end by completing an outline of comparison between *The Shakespeare Revolution* and *Shakespearian Production*: the latter's advantage being that, while passionately involved with the stage, it is utterly free from *parti pris.* Throughout it finds the common ground of actual and mental performances, builds bridges between spectator and reader. Then it explores the topic on which Styan wavers most: shows how the 'oscillating reciprocity' of spatial and temporal responses—of being carried by the current yet also trying to see the whole or to fight to the centre and look outwards—is inevitable to spectator and reader alike, to writer too, and by analogy to us all in life itself. He is more aware of perennial pitfalls, especially those in seeming advantages like the perfect stage or perfect voice. And while Styan enthuses on the theatre's simultaneous appeal to all our senses, Wilson Knight knows how rare this is, because of our senses' uneven balance of power. If the lights-man takes over the actor can take it easy '—and usually does'; as does the listener, 'the eye being always the more restful medium than the intelligence' and 'the human mind incorrigibly flirtatious in matters of visual appeal'. Above all he knows the difficulties of acting—'so difficult that we may call it, on the whole, impossible'. But the low expectations that keep me away from the theatre make him admirably on the lookout for rare small successes.

Wilson Knight's low expectations are in proportion to his respect for the art of acting and the genius of Shakespeare. I have said that Styan minimises the importance and difficulties of acting. He isn't here alive enough to Shakespeare's own subtleties to see the other edge of his gibe, 'was there ever a star bright enough to realize on the stage all of Bradley's closet subtleties?' And while he believes Shakespeare finds full expression only in the theatre, his new book doesn't reassure me that in case of difficulties Shakespeare won't be squashed or have bits cut off to fit him in.

University of Kent at Canterbury HOWARD MILLS

POPE'S OPUS

Alexander Pope's 'Opus Magnum' 1729–1744. By MIRIAM LERANBAUM. Oxford University Press, 1977; £8.50.

Pope told Swift in November 1729 that he was engaged on 'a system of Ethics in the Horatian way'. After long years of translation, editing and, finally, neo-Scriblerian retaliation to accumulated insult, Pope was intent (as friends and critics agreed he should be) on producing a poetic monument which would fittingly preserve his memory for posterity. The 'Opus Magnum', as he came to call it, preoccupied him at least until 1735 and, even when he lost confidence in his ability to complete his elaborate scheme, it was not forgotten. Pope was still wistfully discussing it a few weeks before his death.

From the 'Opus Magnum' only the *Essay on Man* and the four *Moral Essays* survive, although material intended for it would be redeployed later in Pope's career. Miss Leranbaum has collected all the available evidence about

Pope's plans, from his letters, his conversation as recorded by Spence, annotations on MSS. of his poems (notably the *Essay on Man*) and in successive editions of his works during his lifetime. Her scrutiny and interpretation of such evidence, much of it fragmentary, cryptic or contradictory, is lucid, scholarly and convincing. As early as 1730 Pope (according to Spence) foresaw the problem he would never solve. What later became the *Essay on Man* was, as Book I of the 'Ethic Epistles', 'to be to the whole work what a scale is to a book of maps, and in this, I reckon, lies my greatest difficulty—not only in settling and ranging the parts of it aright, but in making them agreeable enough to be read with pleasure'. Pope did not, perhaps temperamentally could not, work systematically and the situation is triply confusing in that the sequences in which the *Moral Essays* (intended for Book II) were written, published and finally arranged all differ. Simultaneously Pope was writing and publishing the *Essay on Man*, the supposed foundation of the scheme. The *Epistle to Bathurst*, in the end the third of the *Moral Essays*, was in fact the second of the eight surviving epistles to be completed and published. Pope, it would appear, never succeeded in 'settling and ranging the parts of it aright'.

As Miss Leranbaum now demonstrates, the eight epistles of the *Essay on Man* and *Moral Essays* influenced each other during composition and have explicit interconnections, springing from their original place in the 'Opus Magnum'. Yet Pope could not finally settle in his various formulations of his plan on the exact relationship of the *Moral Essays* and their unwritten companions to the *Essay* which they were to illustrate. The 'Index' which appeared in a dozen or so copies of the collected *Essay* in 1734 outlined a scheme in which an ambitious series of epistles was distinctly envisaged as corresponding to and elaborating the four epistles of the *Essay*. Yet Pope almost immediately withdrew the 'Index' as if dismayed by its complexity. At that moment of 'drawing in' his plan, it was perhaps in effect doomed. In 1735 (in the octavo *Works* rather than in the more grandiose editions of that year, such are the complexities noted by Miss Leranbaum) the *Moral Essays* were collected as if now constituting a complete 'Second

Book of the Ethic Epistles'. In 1736 Pope could still outline for Swift a new and no less ambitious programme but three years later the *Moral Essays* seem to have been dropped from the scheme, for they are no longer described in the *Works* of 1739 as Book II of the 'Ethic Epistles', cross-references to the *Essay on Man* have been suppressed, and the whole project is referred to in the past tense.

If Pope had lost heart, Warburton was probably responsible for re-awakening his interest. Pope told Spence in 1743 that material on education had been salvaged for use in the *New Dunciad* and that *Brutus*, the epic he was now planning, would deal with 'civil and ecclesiastical government', delicate topics he had once planned to treat in two epistles of the 'Opus Magnum'. Pope's last account of the great scheme dates from April 1744, a few weeks before his death. It is less elaborate and systematic than the better-known version in the 'Advertisement' to the suppressed *Epistles to Several Persons* of 1744, which was more probably the work of Warburton than of the dying poet.

If much of Miss Leranbaum's evidence has been available before, it has not previously been scrutinized as a whole with such care. Her exposition of the often perplexing details is admirably lucid and her speculations, when evidence is lacking, are sober and persuasive. Her central chapters provide readings of the *Essay on Man* and *Moral Essays* which demonstrate their interdependence, at least during composition. A significant part of the discussion of the *Essay* is in fact concerned with its generic identity. Pope himself in 1734 contrasted the *Essay*'s 'grave march like Lucretius' with 'the gayeties of Horace' and Miss Leranbaum pursues this neglected comment to the extent of arguing that the poem's hortatory, magisterial mode, range of tones, organization and content were all influenced positively or negatively by Lucretius. Pope's marginal note to a passage in one of the MSS. of the *Essay*—'Lucretius of death reverst'—can be expanded to apply to the poem as a whole. Pope's affirmation of a providential universe, his insistence on the limits of reason, on universal order behind apparent disorder, on the power of Love informing the material world, are all instances of 'Lucretius . . . reverst'. If Pope had Lucretius explicitly in mind at times, clinching allusions could vanish in the process of composition. In one MS. of the *Essay* Pope refers to Bolingbroke as 'Memmius' (Lucretius' addressee), but later revised the name to 'Laelius' and finally to 'St. John'. He planned to include, but on Berkeley's advice omitted, an address to Christ in imitation of Lucretius's address to Epicurus. In the end the influence of Lucretius is negated, just as explicit indebtedness diminishes in the course of the *Essay* itself and does not reappear in the *Moral Essays*. As for Pope's knowledge of Lucretius, Miss Leranbaum might have reinforced her claims by reference to L. C. Martin's note on 'Lucretius and *The Rape of the Lock*' (*RES* XX (1944), 299–303), which revealed the influence of Creech's translation on the sylphs. Published after the Twickenham edition of the *Rape*, this convincing article receives only bare acknowledgement in subsequent revisions (Twickenham edn., II. 382 n.). The *Essay on Man* was certainly a very different matter. If Pope intended a serious parody of Lucretius, he may have lost his nerve over an enterprise so open to misinterpretation. As it was, one critic of the *Essay* in 1735 thought he was bringing a serious charge against Pope when he accused him of resembling Lucretius (Twickenham edn., III–i. xvii n. 3).

Refreshing in its attempt to find an alternative to the inevitable Horace as a model for Pope, Miss Leranbaum's tendency to isolate the *Essay* generically may reflect Pope's own basic problem: the disparity between the systematic, shapely universe of the poem and the fragmented immediacy of his explorations of human nature and society in the *Moral Essays*. Later chapters on Book IV of the *Dunciad* and *Brutus* contain much of interest. Apart from its use of material once intended for the 'Opus Magnum', *The Dunciad* can also be seen as a deliberate subversion, in its downward, reductionist, fragmenting impulse, of the aspirational, celebratory order of the *Essay on Man*. *Brutus* would have developed themes in Epistle III of the *Essay*: the state of nature, superstition, the restoration of the ideal state. Miss Leranbaum gives a valuable account of this last, curious project of Pope's career (it was, after all, to have been written in blank verse), about which little that is easily accessible has been written. A full transcription of Pope's cryptic prose outline of his epic (as well as the expanded version printed by Ruffhead in 1769) would have been useful, since Miss Leranbaum reveals that earlier scholars have misleadingly reordered Pope's confusing notes.

Miss Leranbaum has made a concise but positive contribution to our understanding of Pope's later years, even if the modern reader of the poetry may find some of its implications slightly confusing. She has convincingly focussed attention on a neglected dimension of the eight epistles of the 'Opus Magnum', their structural correspondences and interdependence. Yet it remains true that the passages in which Pope most explicitly tries to relate the *Moral Essays* back to the *Essay on Man* (including the different manifestations of the Ruling Passion) are among the least effective. Miss Leranbaum can show what Pope had in mind when he claimed in 1733 that his works were 'much more to be liked and understood when consider'd in the relation they bear with each other, than when ignorantly look'd upon one by one'. And yet she has also demonstrated that the *Epistle to Cobham* (in origin a crucial link in tone and content with the *Essay on Man*) and the *Epistle to a Lady* (in several respects carefully related to *Cobham*) were to find no place in the later versions of Pope's scheme. Miss Leranbaum's investigations may in the end have more biographical than critical importance, and not merely by patiently making sense of the bewildering details of composition and publication. The book is inevitably as much about what Pope failed to write as what he did, about his longing in middle age to produce an elaborate ethical poem by which (rather than by the *Dunciad Variorum*) he would be remembered, just as at the very end of his life plans for an idealistic and patriotic epic followed closely on the apocalyptic *New Dunciad*. Such evidence will help the biographer (still awaited) of Pope's later career not merely in matters of detail but by opening larger perspectives. Miss Leranbaum's book, published a few weeks after her own untimely death, is an admirably lucid, unpretentious and scholarly contribution to our understanding of Pope and his aspirations.

Balliol College, Oxford ROGER LONSDALE

MEASURING WITH COFFEE SPOONS

Eliot's Early Years. By LYNDALL GORDON. Oxford University Press, 1977; £4.95.

The more refined the poet, the less refined should be the critic? Not a bad rule of thumb perhaps, and it may work well with Eliot, as much as with Mallarmé or Rilke. 'Politic cautious and meticulous' is *not* the way to be when approaching the reserved and elusive poet who distinguished with precise finger-tips, and if and perhaps and but, between the three voices of poetry; and who tells us that the best poetry 'is not the expression of personality but an escape from personality'. Bernard Shaw observed that T. E. Lawrence was always 'backing into the limelight', and Eliot could be said to make his finest poetry out of a comparable process. Not that this was intentional, it seems to me; it was what happened when a man with the temperament and provenance of Eliot was also a poetic genius. Of course he was not averse to emphasizing the withdrawal in various ways more or less sly, and in essays more than in poems; but this hardly affects the fact that as time goes on his poetry does seem more and more to be the reflection of a personality, and a very interesting and remarkable one.

Bizarre as it might seem, I would connect him here with Hardy, against whose morbidity of mind and unwholesome temperament he directed a well-known aside in *After Strange Gods*. In fact the two had much in common: a temperament of extreme reticence that none the less could not help coming clean in art (which for both meant their gift of poetry) and which indeed had to come clean if the poetry was to be fully realized as art. Hardy's poems about his wife are in this sense very much akin to *The Waste Land*, *Ash Wednesday* and *Four Quartets*, and their kinship is at least partly a matter of the culture and the period: that particular way of becoming and being personal in poetry was possible only to a personality created by that time, its social pressures, inhibitions and opportunities.

No one, in this important respect, could have been less like Eliot than Ezra Pound, who provided the inspiration of a possible technique, but whose personality, as vouchsafed in poetry, was as remote from Eliot's as Browning's from Wordsworth. No one, I fancy, could read Pound's poetry for its personal interest, less and less as time goes by? Pound has no more personality, in the Eliotian sense, than Wallace Stevens; and like good Americans neither missed it: both indeed, perhaps, in their different ways, were scornful of Eliot's need for one, and his subterranean cultivation of it. Stevens refers in his poems to Eliot as 'Mr. X', the man 'too exactly himself', implying that this was a synthetic European construct which the poet had made for himself when he gave up his free and open American heritage. Fortuitously, several contemporary American poets have also aspired to become what Stevens might have called 'too exactly themselves' by writing poetry based on their own life experiences. But what has been called 'confessional' poetry is wholly different from the unwilling and at least partly inadvertent disclosure of his personal being that occurs with Eliot's writing. Yeats, not Eliot, is the master of this *making* of the self, which can be originally and uniquely moving in the work of so great a poet as Robert Lowell.

Eliot would never have identified his self with his poetry; in his case it is because he tries to keep them apart that they join up together in the peculiar way they do. A personality can be more surely based on reticence than on self-proclamation. The great merit and interest of Lyndall Gordon's book is that she is wholly and warmly sympathetic to Eliot's temperament and its difficulties while being quite unreverential about it. Even the fact that she does not write very elegantly or precisely is a help here: the ordinary sloppy tiresome intransigent problems, with which Eliot was afflicted as much or more than most of us, and which as a poet he seems to have needed, become particularly real and mundane in her treatment of them.

Nor would it be vulgar to say that her maternal affection for Eliot makes her understand both him and his poetry the better. Eliot inspired such an affection easily, it is clear, and as the youngest of the family perhaps took it rather for granted. Among many of interest there is a splendid photograph of him sitting beside his mother, on her London visit to him. His suffering smile is still just benevolent; her wish, even at that point, to hold and to mould him is very clear indeed. A powerful lady, Mrs. Eliot senior. It was she who encouraged her son to join the American navy in 1917 (he was rejected); who wrote a war poem for the *Boston Herald*, and thought life should be lived 'hoe in hand'. She also composed a great deal of verse on the standard American theme of moving from our dead selves to higher things.

> Purge from thy heart all sensual desire,
> Let low ambitions perish in the fire
> Of higher aims . . . etc. etc.

Emersonian and transcendental culture is the real background of Eliot's 'spiritual biography' as Lyndall Gordon shrewdly demonstrates. By turning it all back into European culture, Dante, a baptism of the Umbrian school, Bishop Andrewes—Eliot was able to perpetuate the mental habit conditioned in him from his immediate forebears. In rejecting America he regained it by other means.

But the muse had to be English. The most remarkable thing about Eliot's marriage to Vivienne Haigh-Wood—given that proviso—is its commonplaceness. Shy, solipsistic, fastidious young American meets lively talented English girl, who sees no problem in taking him out of himself, encouraging him to be a poet, pushing and teasing him into being alive. It is in some ways a comic reversal of the Henry James couple. Eliot seems to have been, and remained, extraordinarily naive about her, as if naiveté was some sort of defence against the sort of adjustments, disillusionments, and plain putting up with each other, which constitutes experience and reality for most married couples. 'She has everything to give that I want, and she gives it. I owe her everything', he wrote. Very normal from a young man in love, as indeed was the discovery that 'it is terrible to be alone with another person' and that he had achieved not intimacy but lack of privacy. In any event she did not raise Eliot, he depressed her. She took refuge in what we can see today to be acute psychosomatic symptoms, probably without any real physical cause, though it was diagnosed as severe rheumatism and colitis.

But while she was literally dying of Eliot's proximity, he was mysteriously gaining strength from hers. She focused the indeterminate *angst* and exclusion he had felt as a young man. 'The ivory men make company between us', but more important—the sense of deadlock and futility was at last out in the open. The inspiration that for Hardy came after his wife's death and the years of estrangement and quarrel that preceded it came for Eliot before his wife was destroyed by him. In neither case is destruction too dramatic a word. The deep inner reticence which determined the poet-personality of each helped to do in the partner, who was none the less the liberating muse. Each in his own way was probably aware of the extent to which he had 'done a girl in'; both may have felt too the desolating irony of masterpieces inspired in this way.

Yet the commonplace side of things remains more important. Neither Emma not Vivienne was in any drastically unusual sense victim or martyr, and no doubt both husbands intermittently did their best. Lyndall Gordon is wholly fair, I think, and presents the most convincing picture of Vivienne yet to emerge. She also seems not unhumorously aware of the odd kinds of advantage—apart from those relating to his art—which Eliot acquired from his disastrous marriage. It made him more pale and interesting to a literary gang who were otherwise a bit inclined to laugh at him. 'Come and dine' wrote Virginia Woolf to a friend, 'Eliot will be there in a four-piece suit'. Four-piece or not, the fact that he could be there, and everywhere else that offered the world of culture and fashion, was at least partly due to his being attached and yet unattached in a way that appealed to hostesses and intrigued potential lion-hunters. Like Hardy again, Eliot was the most pertinacious of aspirants in the *beau monde*, and his domestic situation both stimulated his attendance and gave it a certain piquancy. If Vivienne had been a tough, flexible, enterprising girl—really able to 'help' him—the results could only have been disappointing. The happy young Eliots would have been left on their own, and then what would have happened to his talents?

'When he failed to waken to religious emotions he abruptly tried an alternative, to awaken himself through marriage.' That seems a true and worthwile point, but Lyndall Gordon is much better on the domestic side—it is this which makes her book so continuously readable and interesting—than on theories of conversion and its relation to the poetry. There are moments here, as when she says 'In *The Idea of a Christian Society* Eliot became more genuinely English than any American before him' when she seems to get it wrong: his Church of Englishness is surely a very idiosyncratic and imported affair. At the same time it is true that his need for it became as inevitable and in a sense as commonplace as his need for marriage. Chastity and non-attachment had become no penance to him: they were just what he most wanted. And in a mundane sense they were now very different from the masochistic fantasies of martyrdom which had haunted him at Harvard, and produced such tedious juvenilia as 'The Love Song of St. Sebastian' and 'The Death of St. Narcissus'. Reality was much more like 'Animula'.

> The pain of living and the drug of dreams
> Curl up the small soul in the window seat
> Behind the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

The simplicity of Eliot's need for religion, however dressed up later by himself and his commentators, is very moving, and again reminds one of Hardy. But whereas Hardy could write a poem every day, as a craftsman might make a woodcut, Eliot's marvellous exudations slipped from him at the rarest intervals, and as the reward of much daily grind and travail in school, bank, or office; above all from his sense of being outside things—'Recalling things that other people have desired'.

That quotation comes from 'Portrait of A Lady', surely far the best as well as the most moving of the earlier poems. There is a big difference between the 'whole' poems of that time and the 'collage' ones made up of bits and pieces. Even 'Gerontion' and some later poems now seem shrunken and mannered beside the 'Portrait', and the reason must be that the 'Portrait' is not only penetrating and understanding in itself but is wholly fused with the guilt, distaste, and fastidious depression of the poet. Lyndall Gordon is surely way off again in saying that in it 'Eliot caricatured his embarrassing friendship with an emotional older woman, Adeleine Moffat, who used to serve tea to Harvard men in a home crowded with bric-à-brac'. The information is well worth having, but 'caricatured' totally misrepresents the tone which—interestingly—is very close to many of Larkin's poems (and through Larkin to the Hardy parallel again). In all three cases emotion has a greater intensity than the poetry itself (compare Hardy saying 'I am just the same as when . . .') and the experience seems more intent than the poem—we do not in the least feel, as we might with Yeats, that the poetry *creates* the experience and was written to do so. As Lyndall Gordon points out, Bernard Bergonzi made an enlightening comment in his own book on Eliot about the way in which a personal sensation seems to broaden and generalize here into a whole world of erotic failure. Something of the same kind happens in 'A Cooking Egg', 'Sweeney Among the Nightingales' and 'The wind sprang up at four o'clock'. In an important sense there is nothing *fancy* about this remarkable poetry, which turns universal kinds of experience into something that fascinates us by its personal directness and singularity. Lyndall Gordon's book does a most valuable job in giving us many new leads and biographical indications of why this should be so.

JOHN BAYLEY

St. Catherine's College
Oxford

The Critical Forum

SHELLEY, WORDSWORTH AND THE LANGUAGE OF DISSENT

We should be grateful to Richard Cronin (*E in C*, July 1977) for trying to make something of Shelley's use of language. However, to argue that the Romantic poets were engaged in a struggle against language, at times succumbing to the 'conservative', 'gravitational force exerted by language itself', at times succeeding when 'their poems employ, however paradoxically, a language of dissent', smacks more of contradiction than of paradox. It is well known that some of the Romantic poets sought to change what was admissible in a poem, and hence to change the relationship of the diction of poetry to the everyday use of language, but that is hardly to engage in a (doomed) struggle with language itself. Surely there are more cogent reasons for the 'lapse into conservatism of Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge' than suffocation by language.

Moreover, whatever the merits of Cronin's argument, it gains nothing by his demonstrated reading of Shelley's poetry. Cronin quotes Shelley's attack on monogamy, from *Epipsychidion*, beginning:

> I never was attached to that great sect,
> Whose doctrine is, that each one should select
> Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,
> And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
> To cold oblivion . . . (149–153)

and comments: 'Shelley encourages rather than fights against the conventional shocked reaction. His verse assumes a Byronic tone, a rakish jauntiness, that runs the risk of confirming the reader in his opinion of the moral inferiority of the polygamous'. A 'rakish jauntiness'? More a leaden didacticism. And a 'Byronic tone'? Byron knew better, and wrote better than that, and where Shelley naively challenged an ethic that many forgot, in deed if not in word, Byron saw that everyone was at it:

> The single ladies wishing to be double,
> The married ones to save the virgins trouble.
> (*Don Juan*, XII. 58)

Earlier Cronin mentions *Paradise Lost*, a poem that turns upon Adam's assertion of Eve's uniqueness, and this should have led him to see that what fatally flaws Shelley's attack on monogamy is Shelley's overweening sense of his own uniqueness and importance, and his failure to engage with the basis of monogamy, that is, a sense of the uniqueness of someone other than oneself. So that when Cronin goes on to assert that Shelley is somehow appropriating the language of marriage 'so that it might become fit to express his own ethic of love', this misses the objection that Shelley cannot appropriate what he clearly does not understand. Shelley's subsequent choice, in *Epipsychidion*, of the term 'bride' (474) hardly demonstrates, as Cronin asserts, that Shelley found its connotations disagreeable and sought to change them; on the contrary, Shelley is busy exploiting those traditional connotations to the point of cliché.

It is a pity that Cronin takes Shelley as his model, because the problem raised by Cronin initially—the relation of thought to expression—really was an issue for another Romantic poet, Wordsworth. Cronin sees Wordsworth as largely rejecting language, but in his *Essays Upon Epitaphs* Wordsworth paid tribute to the power of language: 'Words are too awful an instrument for good and evil, to be trifled with; they hold above all other external powers a dominion over thought' (Third Essay). But he recoiled from a simplistic notion of the relationship between thought and expression that would belittle genuine emotion which found expression in a questionable style. Yet if the expression is wanting, how do we know that the feeling is genuine? Wordsworth has no answer to this other than to affirm that 'Where the soul has been thoroughly stricken . . . there is never a want of *positive* strength' (Third Essay). But he does have one explanation of this gap between feeling and expression, and that is the barrier presented by poetic form and style, thus a man 'may have his expression thoroughly defiled and clogged by the style prevalent in his age, yet still . . . his under feeling may remain strong and pure' (Second Essay). Not a view to put to critics who hold the inseparability of form and content as an article of faith, but Wordsworth, like most poets, clearly maintained the distinction. For him the heroic couplet, with its forced antitheses, could represent only 'qualities and actions at war with each other and with themselves', whereas in 'the mind of the truly great and good everything that is of importance is at peace with itself; all is stillness, sweetness and stable grandeur' (Third Essay). It is hardly surprising that Wordsworth avoided the heroic couplet, or that his best poetry should be in blank verse; such, rather than any 'language of dissent', is the material of poetic revolutions.

MICHAEL MCKIE

Royal Holloway College
London

ESSAYS IN CRITICISM

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF LITERARY CRITICISM

Vol. XXVIII July 1978 No. 3

Selfishness in *Measure for Measure*

CHRISTOPHER PALMER

IT is often claimed, or simply assumed, that *Measure for Measure* is a 'moral' play. J. M. Nosworthy, for instance, feels that in this the play resembles the rest of Shakespeare's 'romantic comedies'. Isabella's acceptance of the bed-trick, the Duke's idea, at III. i. 260 (evidently a turning point of *some* kind) 'symbolizes a reversal of her previous values and marks a new access of human understanding'. He continues

> In thus learning to know each other, to know themselves and their fellow-men, in shedding pretentiousness and false values, and in resolving themselves from discordant twain to concordant one, Vincentio and Isabella conform to what we take to be the normal pattern of Shakespearean romantic comedy. . . . The curious thing is that the transformation renders them wiser and essentially holier persons.
>
> (New Penguin *Measure for Measure,* pp. 34, 44)

What happens, according to Nosworthy, and what *should* happen if the play conforms to reasonable critical expectations, is an increase in self-knowledge and a moral transformation involving subjection or transcendence of the individual ego and its false values. Is this true, and would *Measure for Measure* necessarily soothe or improve us if it were true?

It may be that in certain crises knowledge of the self has nothing positive to offer us. With people as strong and assertive as Angelo and Isabella, this is not because there is nothing 'there' in the self, but because the self, in order to survive, obeys other imperatives than those towards knowledge. (There is no doubt that Claudio's, Angelo's and Isabella's survival *is* threatened, if not physically then in every personal way.) All the leading characters in *Measure for Measure* are reluctant to learn what experience offers to teach them.

They assert high ideals, confident moral ambitions or opinions; they debate them, and they undergo the sudden onslaught of new destructive impulses or of shocking discoveries. How are ideals to accommodate such impulses and discoveries? Angelo's and Isabella's ideals express their public, conscious selves; they are chosen from the public stock of values and principles—counsels of perfection threatened by new experience, by the emergence of a different, unideal self. *Measure for Measure* is full of scenes of argument or persuasion, or, more pointedly, of scenes in which a character has to communicate some appalling or outlandish and thus almost unsayable fact or cruel demand to another. The predicament is a social as well as an intensely personal one, because it demands all the resources of 'speech and discourse', in the Duke's phrase. Thus Angelo attempts to convey his desires to Isabella, Isabella to convey to Claudio her refusal to submit to Angelo, and Claudio to convey in turn his refusal to die for his sister; another, simpler instance is Claudio's difficulty in conveying to Lucio what he has been condemned for. The resources of discourse are intimately and thoroughly tested, and they are not always found wanting. People often rise to the test as to a challenge, with alacrity and confident warmth. It is not at all certain that Angelo underestimates the toughness of those he is up against when he ruthlessly condemns Claudio. His 'victims' counterattack him vigorously and volubly, undismayed by the implication that if Claudio is in jeopardy, everyone is in jeopardy, since Claudio's crime is venial compared to those that are rife in Vienna. Isabella in effect joins the attack when she comes to plead for Claudio. There is a general release of energy.

Yet experience *is* threatening; as pressures begin to bear inwards and debate becomes a strain rather than a release, Angelo, Claudio and Isabella are in danger of

72689

disintegrating under its suddenness and fierceness. It is possible that people who were less confident and forthright would be less threatened by the sort of experience that falls outside their comprehensive, sweeping schemes of things. Perhaps their values are false as well as inadequate. Yet perhaps, on the other hand, only such an inveteracy and persistence of response, of assertive certainty such as we see in Isabella, Angelo and Lucio could meet the shock of unlooked-for experience. This way of putting the case has at least the merit of avoiding the implication that experience and expression (and behind expression, conscious moral principle) are in merely ironical relation, experience always refuting what people assert of it. The egotism of high principle does not simply give way to the egotism of newly discovered need, until all are rescued by the Duke's saving lack of ego. This describes the play's structure at the expense of its life, which refuses us any simple, schematic use of terms like egotism. 'We are all frail', says Angelo, ironically to the tough Isabella. The statement is so variously true that it casts as much light on human strength as on human frailty. Frailty and strength are still fiercely intertwined at the end of the play. Finally the Duke achieves a sort of relaxation, a truce rather than a victory, and he does this as much by his negligent casualness as by his methodical control. The characters are robbed of the support and clarity that their self-defining values have given them. This is most explicitly true of Angelo:

> What dost thou? Or what art thou, Angelo?
> (II. ii. 173)

Yet Angelo, Claudio, Isabella and Mariana do acknowledge an elemental self on which the personality is based and, even if it seems an alien thing, they defend it. This self is still, surprisingly, associated with high ideals, yet not finally dependent on them or sustained by them. This is what the Duke, by turns gingerly and clumsily, manages and manipulates at the end of the play.

Angelo decides that he has to rape Isabella; Isabella refuses him, and refuses to sacrifice her chastity to save Claudio's life; Mariana refuses to give up Angelo. The important moral experience that the play offers us is the experience of facing these facts of behaviour and understanding why they are inevitable. They might seem to be 'natural', in the sense that Lucio, for instance, feels that Angelo's self-restraint is *un*natural, but they seem too extreme and singular to be natural in any broad sense; neither Lucio nor the Duke can really predict Angelo's lust, or Mariana's love for Angelo. Oddly enough, the Duke's moral and natural decision to salvage as much as possible is shamefaced and unadmitted, and his personality is vague: it seems as if Society can do nothing more than pick up the pieces after these unavoidable, destructive acts of self-assertion.

We do not understand the characters in the sense of seeing how they are like us (since they are not), nor can we rest content in the view that they are defined by their moral failures. They are too singular, alien and unforthcoming for this sort of composed understanding.

> Is it not strange, and strange?
> Nay, it is ten times strange.
> It is not truer he is Angelo
> Than this is all as true as it is strange.
> (V. i. 42–44)

The play's greatness is due to the way in which it allows people (most potently Isabella) to assert their singularity, their 'selfishness', in the most blunt and uncompromising ways. Shakespeare acknowledges the claims of pride—not pride as a virtue, but pride as a necessity, *in extremis*. These claims are certainly not moral ones, nor are they a substitute for morality. A great deal of the play (notably the bed-trick) takes place in some uncertain realm outside the moral, though it rather sheepishly and edgily tries to return to it.

Isabella subtly influences others, inspires or incites them, without intending to; the reverse of intimate herself, she creates an intimacy without noticing it. This happens with Lucio and the Duke as well as with Angelo. This does not make her responsible for the 'temptation' she exerts; even Angelo is capable of seeing that. Yet it is certainly true that her unexpected attractiveness is a different, separate thing from her strength of personality. She shares a certainty of will with the other women in the play, Juliet and Mariana, but it is given a special quality, a force as well as a rigidity, by her chastity, and this chastity needs to be defined. Her chastity is her strong singleness, her independence; that is how she resembles a character like Helena in *All's Well*. Helena can retain and express her singleness while she devotes herself to the self-effacing service of a man like Bertram—retain it even after she is pregnant. Isabella is more frank and blunt than Helena, and thus at times strident or unseeing. Her pride is much greater, but so is her trust in the world. On the other hand, although she can be warm and eloquent (her eloquence with Angelo is not simply public and militant—she is putting herself into it), her capacity for ungracious bluntness is arresting and valuable. Her chastity is a state of mind, a direction of her whole personality, and is not the same as her virginity, a simple physical fact, but it requires her virginity. In this she is different from Helena. If she were to marry the Duke, loss of virginity would bring loss of chastity: she would not (I surmise) take shelter behind any broader sense of chastity. Chastity must have a literal sense. Her literalness—the fact that she sees no distinction here—is her virtue and her defect; it is simpler than either 'repression' or conscious rectitude and more resistant to our irony or confident moral judgment. She asserts that there is a part of herself that she has a right to control in spite of the ambiguities of attractiveness and the subtleties of chastity. Her repudiation of Angelo and Claudio implies that she declines to be held responsible for what she *seems* to be (that is, attractive in various ways that she cannot control). She rejects the part that she has been acting in Angelo's excited drama without knowing it. She would reject the common assumption that a person's unconscious tells more of his real self than his conscious, than what is willed and deliberate. What a woman 'means' unconsciously is very often what a man takes her to mean and, like Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, Isabella refuses to accept that her life stands at the level of another's dreams, even if they are disturbingly plausible.

Isabella's first reply to Lucio is practical—no traces of 'strict restraint':

> O, let him marry her.
>
> (I. iv. 49)

Her opening declaration to Angelo is equally sincere, but quite different:

> There is a vice that most I do abhor.
>
> (II. ii. 29)

In her plea for Claudio's life she is, however, hesitant at first. She is intensely conscious of the difficulty of her task. It is no use being 'original'; she must be effective. She can never be sure that she has hit home. Angelo is also uncertain, though in a different way. He betrays himself by over-emphasis: being inexperienced, he is 'acting' the severe magistrate. Neither is capable of being or has been trained to be tentative. Each will see and presume upon the strength of the other, not the vulnerability. The tension of their first scene together proceeds from our perception of their mutual misunderstanding, not from our perception of their moral flaws. More characteristic than her hesitancy is Isabella's slight clumsiness:

> Tomorrow? O, that's sudden; spare him.
> He's not prepared for death. Even for our kitchens
> We kill the fowl of season. Shall we serve heaven
> With less respect than we do minister
> To our gross selves?
>
> (II. ii. 83–87)

The image of the fowl is faintly inept. Yet her point holds. Killing is killing, whether it be the ordinary dispatch of a chicken or the execution of a man. The facts obtrude bonily beneath her metaphors. Isabella does not give up; she casts about for arguments.

> Why do you put these sayings upon me?
>
> (II. ii. 133)

says Angelo. It is primarily her response to Angelo that gives her the will and energy to persist—he is proud and provoking; yet he is like her and therefore should be amenable to the arguments of orthodoxy. Their likeness should assure her safety and perhaps eventual success. She warms to her task; her gathering confidence leads her to introduce and then transcend that sordid word 'bribery':

> Not with fond sicles of the tested gold,
> Or stones whose rate are either rich or poor
> As fancy values them: but with true prayers
> That shall be up at heaven and enter there
> Ere sunrise; prayers from preservèd souls,
> From fasting maids whose minds are dedicate
> To nothing temporal.
>
> (II. ii. 149–155)

Angelo is pressed hard; she is a formidable arguer—her uncertain casting about for arguments becomes a thorough sorting through of all options, until Angelo is trapped. And the slight sensuous chill of this speech proclaims and provokingly enforces her wholeness and separateness. Angelo is 'proud' yet petty, she is humble and 'dedicate' yet highly privileged, by virtue of her sacred 'preserved' state.

In the second Act II scene between them, Angelo also exploits what they have in common, but his manouevre is strained and ambiguous, his utterance self-referring in a way that hers never is. He is on the defensive; his misuse of authority is a response to her dialectical force, but behind her dialectical force is the superior strength of her virtue, whatever ironies he has suddenly, hectically, come to see in this. He defends himself against her virtue as he betrays it; he can betray it because its confidence depends on her trust in him.

> Then I shall pose you quickly . . .
> Nay, I'll not warrant that, for I can speak
> Against the thing I say.
>
> (II. iv. 51, 59–60)

The consciousness of irony is entirely his.

He is wrenching his accustomed style off its bearings, to contain his new meaning and purpose. If her words insensibly converted him, his words may do the same to her. The expectation is futile, indeed crazy, but it is elicited and excited by her promptness to respond to him. Yet he is not simply using argument to pursue his purpose, but also to conceal it:

> That you might know it, would much better please me
> Than to demand what 'tis.
>
> (II. iv. 32–3)

As Isabella says

> To have what we would have, we speak not what we mean.
>
> (II. iv. 118)

She understands quickly and eagerly, yet, apparently, she refuses to understand. As he poses the case, he speaks of himself as 'this supposed'. He is making a cipher of his function as a possible lover or lecher, to borrow an earlier phrase of his (II. ii. 39). The longer he does this, the less chance has he of being accepted as a person, unlikely as this is in any event.

> . . . you must lay down the treasures of your body
> To this supposed . . .
>
> (II. iv. 96–7)

The emphasis falls on the 'treasures of your body'—not at all on 'this supposed'. Angelo's impulses waver behind this screen of hypothesis. How much does he want Isabella at this moment? Who could say yes to this proposition thus put?

Angelo is here close to being stalemated although, as the scene proceeds, his mode of speech can barely contain his violence of will. Certainly the episode shows the dangers and the inadequacies of repression and over-intellectuality, at least in Angelo, and the dangers more than the inadequacies, but the fiercest irony is more specific than this, and it arises from a closer measure of engagement between ourselves and the characters. Shakespeare explores the peculiar tensions of the relationship between these two extremely strong yet unstable people; the tensions arise from their likeness or, more specifically, from the way each sees, exploits, yet also wants to deny their likeness. The irony is that it is Angelo who is under extreme pressure, though he is the aggressor, the rapist.

As the scene proceeds, we see the irony of Isabella's ardent agreement yet fundamental incomprehension, but this is only part of the effect. She surmises that Angelo has taken up her earlier argument that anyone might feel like Claudio (as indeed in a dreadful way he has), and is pressing it further in order to test her: 'It's all very well to argue thus about frailty, but what if you actually had to *act* frailly?' As I have suggested, her eagerness to argue, and her trust ('Great men may jest with saints', II. ii. 127) enable Angelo to go so far without giving himself away. They are also, however, behind the simple directness with which she rebuffs Angelo. She is confident that her refusal is the right response to the judge's test, briskly dismissing any ambiguity:

> Ignomy in ransom and free pardon
> Are of two houses: lawful mercy is
> Nothing kin to foul redemption.
>
> (II. iv. 111–113)

Neither Claudio's life nor her chastity are yet brought into question—she does not think about them. Within this certainty her imagination can move freely and ardently, for instance in her prompt agreement with Angelo that women are frail,

> Women, help heaven! Men their creation mar
> In profiting by them. Nay, call us ten times frail,
> For we are soft as our complexions are,
> And credulous to false prints.
>
> (II. iv. 127–130)

She exposes herself to his 'false prints', no doubt—but *she*, of all women, is not 'soft', even if she is 'credulous'. The warmth of her defence of human frailty, not only here but throughout the two scenes, stems from a strong sense of where she stands in an orderly world, a sense of her chastity and Angelo's strictness and sincerity. She is excusing and defending frailty, but is not yet forced to acknowledge its presence, to experience her own frailty. Yet it remains true that her speeches about mercy in these scenes are the warmest and most cogent in the play; this might imply that people do not always give the best account of something like human weakness from having experienced it directly. It is difficult to act and know at the same time, especially when your 'action' takes the form of debate. That is why the active Duke is so often banal in his moral observations. (That is also why other characters in *Antony & Cleopatra* such as Cleopatra and Octavius express a much more vivid sense of Antony's greatness than he can himself.) Isabella turns on Angelo with formidable toughness—

> I will proclaim thee, Angelo, look for't!
> Sign me a present pardon for my brother,
> Or with an outstretched throat I'll tell the world
> What man thou art
>
> (II. iv. 151–154)

—there is hardly need or opportunity for our sympathy. Yet when she decides to turn to her brother for help, in response to Angelo's

> Who will believe thee, Isabel?
>
> (II. iv. 154)

our sympathy returns. She is transferring her trust to one whose frailty she has just been excusing, as far as she felt she could.

She has perhaps never felt much for Claudio. She does not really claim to feel much now. If sisterly feeling is natural, it is hardly obligatory. That she be obliged to feel for Claudio now is, evidently, as unjust as that she be obliged to love Angelo. Isabella's lack of feeling for her brother is not more unnatural than Angelo's sudden feeling for her. Understanding the tensions of the relationship that has come into existence between her and Angelo, we understand Angelo's destructive impulse; given this, we can hardly fail to extend our understanding to Isabella. After all, neither Angelo's feeling nor Isabella's refusal of it (or lack of it) is any more unnatural than Mariana's persistence of love for Angelo.

Should we nevertheless infer that her predicament with Claudio demonstrates the fallacy, perhaps the selfishness, of her reliance on arguments and principles? Just as high principles imprisoned Angelo and negated his passion, even while he exploited them to advance it, so they expose Isabella to Claudio's passionate defence of his right to life, since it can be seen as a development of her own arguments to Angelo. Certainly her dilemma is a cruel one. Arguments and principles exist partly in order that we are not so brutally exposed to our feelings and their limitations. She has done her best for Claudio; her speeches about mercy are warm and eloquent; even after Angelo reveals himself, her first move is to blackmail him to try to secure a pardon for Claudio. It is true that Isabella is now jolted out of her idealistic certainty and fluency. The conditions that made it possible have been violently suspended. Claudio eventually succeeds in telling her that he is not willing to die for her chastity; by this stage, very understandably, Isabella is incapable of retorting, impersonally, that in that case he should die for his original crime. Instead she retorts, personally, that she will pray for his death.

> 'Tis best that thou diest quickly.
>
> (III. i. 154)

Her response captures unexpected sympathy, embodying as it does her characteristic bluntness. While Claudio is in suspense, everyone is in suspense, and an air of agonizing uncertainty hangs over everyone.

Claudio's defence of his right to life——his life, a single encompassing feeling and fact, most vividly present in his imagination of existence after death—is moving, and bears on the matter in a way that Isabella's speeches on mercy do not, but he is not at all confident in putting his argument that this life of his is worth her chastity, though it ought logically to follow. When he does, Isabella rebuffs him vividly:

> Is't not a kind of incest to take life
> From thine own sister's shame?
>
> (III. i. 142–143)

So much for the mutual bonds of brother and sister in this desperate situation. In a crisis it is the survival of the individual that is paramount; principles and arguments, if they are called upon, are employed to justify this fact.

Isabella does not seem to *choose* to be 'selfish' rather than 'unselfish' here, but rather to react thoughtlessly and ruthlessly. (There is no right choice, no solution to her dilemma; she would not really alter this fact by behaving more sympathetically.) Perhaps, without admitting it to herself, she expected Claudio to fail the test: this partly explains her fury now. Her pride—

> Might but my bending down
> Reprieve thee from thy fate, it should proceed
> (III. i. 147–148)

—stems from disgust at the prospect of humiliating submission to Angelo, and disgust at what she may now feel was the humiliation of pleading for a man like Claudio to a man like Angelo. Yet she must also feel with an equal intensity the complete and humiliating collapse of the men, underlined by their demand that she help them out. She wishes to remain aloof from the whole sight. In the last analysis men have one expectation of women, that they submit, either to necessity or to masculine force. Isabella feels that she has unwittingly submitted too far already.

Any mitigating qualifications and sympathies are ignored or rejected. We would be more comfortable with someone who found it harder to behave thus, but Isabella is too passionate and singleminded for that diversion of energy. Once she has refused Claudio she is reserved and contained, where we might have expected despair or exhaustion, which is what Angelo and Claudio come to.

> Let me hear you speak farther. I have spirit to do
> anything that appears not foul in the truth of my spirit,
> (III. i. 207–209)

she says to the Duke. Appearance can deceive, as Isabella has already discovered, but we must nevertheless act in our 'truth of spirit'.

The Duke's reply here is typical:

> Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful.
> (III. i. 210)

He agrees, but he soothes. He is conventional where Isabella is severely orthodox. She is now, it seems, in his hands. Her unsparing fierceness of spirit is to be controlled and used, and perhaps educated. Certainly the Duke does not lack moral ambitions. He is like Angelo and Isabella—strict, aloof, tough and idealistic; yet his idealism is different from theirs. If he occasionally goes out of his way to proclaim moral principles and purposes he seems, in his proclamations, a precursor of Hobbes: 'Words are wise men's counters: they do but reckon by them, but they are the money of fools'. He lacks 'sincerity', to use the word Isabella applies to Angelo (V. i. 443). Yet the matter is more complex than this. The Duke is persistent rather than regularly successful in his actions; nor is he thoroughly self-aware. He learns from his mistakes, but he does not admit that he has made any; nor (any more than Angelo or Isabella) is he capable of learning all that his mistakes might teach him.

In the scene in which he decides to tell Isabella that her brother has died after all—the scene in which he learns that Angelo has failed to keep his bargain—he says he intends to

> . . . keep her ignorant of her good,
> To make her heavenly comforts of despair
> When it is least expected.
> (IV. iii. 107–110)

That despair brings heavenly comforts is not what *Measure for Measure* suggests. The Duke's consolations here are in fact perfunctory, but Isabella is not feeling normal grief or despair and so does not call their adequacy into question. Perhaps the Duke takes this into account, finding in her a rigour and toughness equivalent to his own, but his remarks about 'heavenly comforts' suggest that he does expect her to feel something akin to normal grief. Both this expectation (still alive in the Duke in the last scene of the play) and his exalted didactic ambitions pass Isabella by. Her capacity for trust remains unquenched in her, as do her austerity and directness of spirit: the two are still interdependent. Her trust in the Duke is, however, to be strained once again in the last scene, by his diverse purposes with her and attitudes to her.

When the Duke returns, Isabella launches into her cry for justice on Angelo. This has always been her threat and demand, but here in addition she speaks on the Duke's instructions:

> O worthy prince, dishonour not your eye
> By throwing it on any other object
> Till you have heard me in my true complaint
> And given me justice, justice, justice, justice!
> (V. i. 22–25)

Again our attention is drawn to bare, perhaps essential human needs: justice, and justice on Angelo, is still needed. Isabella is by no means 'impartial': it is justice *for herself* that she stridently wants. Yet public values are worth little unless they help the individual in his isolated predicament. It is not that Isabella's 'selfishness' contaminates her plea for justice, any more than Claudio's contaminates his plea for life,—it is that the plea for justice can help to save her. Yet she wants vindication rather than mere salvation, or rather she will not be saved unless she is vindicated. With his purposes, which are comprehensive if they are not always clear, the Duke cannot permit justice to take its simple, fierce course. He 'throws his eye' on all and sundry—even the Provost, Friar Peter, Lucio; he indulges in an ironic joke

> Here is Lord Angelo shall give you justice.
> (V. i. 27)

Then follows the charade of Angelo's and Escalus's judicial investigation into these accusations and teasing circumstances. They are led hopelessly astray: thus the working of 'justice' in practice. When the Duke unmasks himself and in consequence Angelo at his own time (slightly forestalled by Lucio, in the play's muddled, unspectacular way), *he* then takes on the voice of strict justice:

An Angelo for Claudio, death for death!
(V. i. 406)

Isabella is brought (not for the first time) to plead for mercy. The Duke has 'taught' her the need for mercy. Her plea is however in answer to Mariana's appeal to her.

The two women have a good deal in common. Mariana has previously been the Duke's docile collaborator. She now reveals herself in ironic obedience to her 'husband's' command (the irony may not be intended but it is felt):

> This is that face, thou cruel Angelo,
> Which once thou swor'st was worth looking on.
> This is the hand which, with a vowed contract,
> Was fast belocked in thine. This is the body
> That took away the match from Isabel,
> And did supply thee at thy garden-house
> In her imagined person.
> (V. i. 205–211)

Mariana's self-proclamation here, after all her riddling, is so blunt and intransigent as to be brazen. 'I won. You lost. Isabella lost'. 'Carnally, she says', notes the inconvenient Lucio of her 'knowledge' (V. i. 212). The Duke copes here by threatening to 'mock' her with a husband, so that she is forced to plead for his life.

> They say best men are moulded out of faults
> And, for the most, become much more the better
> For being a little bad. So may my husband.
> (V. i. 436–439)

When one is addressing a man who finds himself able to suggest that even Barnardine may be reformed, it is doubtless judicious to take this line, and that 'best men are moulded out of faults' might seem to follow very positively from so many recognitions of man's natural guiltiness and fallibility, but Mariana's argument is heavily qualified and understated. 'So may my husband.' Mariana did not in fact substitute for Isabella with Angelo on account of his virtues or his potential for improvement but on account of himself, or, rather, on account of herself. One is reminded of Juliet's exchange with the Duke:

Love you the man that wronged you?
Yes, as I love the woman that wronged him.
(II. iii. 24–25)

'I crave no other, nor no better man', Mariana said earlier (V. i. 423). Mariana carries some of the mysterious isolatedness of the moated grange with her, and she is simple and blunt. Love in her is strange and fierce, rather than socially amenable.

Isabella responds to Mariana's appeal, but she still expresses her 'truth of spirit',—a partial and very resistant spirit:

I partly think
A due sincerity governèd his deeds
Till he did look on me.
(V. i. 442–444)

This is not passionate pleading. Her remark suggests a covert pride or at least interest in the fact that it was she, not Mariana, who first swayed Angelo from virtue.

The Duke has said that she would want Angelo punished for Claudio's sake, but this is not quite so. No doubt she remembers what last passed between her and Claudio:

My brother had but justice . . .
(V. i. 445)

—'he had justice, and we must hold to that, in spite of all circumstances and qualifications'—this seems to be her opinion, even as she asks for mercy for Angelo. We might on the contrary feel that he had no more than justice and that that exposed the limitations of justice in these tangled circumstances. She proceeds

Thoughts are no subjects,
Intents but merely thoughts.
(V. i. 450–1)

We might again think that the argument would more naturally go the other way. In the case of fornication the act itself is immaterial, since it is sinful or allowable according to circumstances; what is morally significant is 'intent', and in that case the violent Angelo is much guiltier than Claudio who acted (as the Provost says) as if in a dream (II. ii. 4). Yet Isabella is not chiefly interested in Angelo; she is thinking, it would seem, of the whole 'needless process' (as she calls it, V. i. 92) of argument, appeal, repudiation, condemnation that she traversed with Angelo and Claudio. She justified mercy, then violently condemned Angelo and Claudio. Claudio justified his life, humiliated himself; then, as we know, he gave up, or as Isabella is to believe, lost his life anyway. 'Thoughts are no subjects'—what we find ourselves thinking or feeling is not fully ours. Isabella does not go as far as Angelo's self-interested

> Our compelled sins
> Stand more for number than accompt.
> (II. iv. 57–58)

Her conclusions are subtler. She attempts to come to terms with the ambiguities of attraction and responsibility. She concedes a lot, given her strictness and idealism, yet, in fact, she concedes less than she appears to. Her speech is after all another argument, another required persuasion, this time at the Duke's bidding. Is she simply saying that she is weary of the role? If the Duke is satisfied with her performance, that is because he has learnt to be satisfied with whatever he can get.

Perhaps Isabella now has a disenchanted sense that all is not as it seems, that her actions were part of some larger order, if that is not too grand a phrase for it. Both the Duke and Lucio knew that Angelo was not what he seemed, yet the Duke appointed him and Lucio encouraged Isabella to plead to him. Now she must demand justice on Angelo that the Duke's purposes be set in train, and —minutes later—mercy for him that they be brought closer to consummation. One feels that she is refusing a more than minimal commitment, because she is no longer sure what she is committing herself to. Yet we may put the matter more positively. The Duke presumes upon Isabella's toughness—you have to be tough to change from demand for justice to argument for mercy; *humility* is not really what is needed to take the shock of different circumstance and respond vigorously. If he does this, then he has to reckon on the consequences. It is with a certain satisfaction that one notices that he has not altogether done this. He still expects Isabella to manifest normal sisterly grief for Claudio. She does not.

The Duke turns, as if baffled, to arraign the Provost:

> I have bethought me of another fault.
>
> (V. i. 453)

Of course this is 'staged'—the Provost is to bring in Claudio. Claudio was never executed at all! Yet the Duke has just had the opportunity to learn what Isabella feels about Claudio. What should have been another startling coup is queered, and the Duke mumbles his pardon for Claudio:

> *Provost* This is another prisoner that I saved,
> Who should have died when Claudio lost his head,
> As like almost to Claudio as himself.
> *The Duke* If he be like your brother, for his sake
> Is he pardoned. . . .
>
> (V. i. 484–488)

Then follows a brief proposal of marriage to Isabella, cut short with the abrupt

> But fitter time for that.
>
> (V. i. 490)

It is as if the Duke no longer quite knows what will 'go over'.

Perhaps Isabella's demand for justice is mistaken, and the Duke's dispensation of mercy wise, because neither Claudio nor Angelo is what he once was—both are only 'like' themselves, shadows of themselves. Yet the Duke's grasp on this is unsteady. When the Duke is at last revealed, Angelo is stunned. He compares the Duke to 'power divine'; he asks for death. In this he is consistent with his earlier remark to Escalus:

> When I, that censure him, do so offend,
> Let mine own judgment pattern out my death
> And nothing come in partial.
>
> (II. i. 29–31)

The Duke refuses to comply. We might suppose that this is because he realises that Angelo is not the same man as the man who was guilty of those crimes. He does not know, as we do, that Angelo was exhausted and despairing even before the scene began (IV. iv. 18–32), though he has no evidence that he is impudent, as he calls him here. But he does not want to know. He knows just enough of Angelo, has learnt just enough of humanity, to teach him that Angelo's inner depths, or inner emptiness, had better not be plumbed. He comments later, after the threat of marriage and then execution, and Mariana's and Isabella's appeals for mercy,

> By this Lord Angelo perceives he's safe;
> Methinks I see a quickening in his eye.
> Well, Angelo, your evil quits you well.
>
> (V. i. 491–493)

Angelo is human like the rest of us—so the Duke imposes. It is as if Angelo had been caught in some embarrassing peccadillo and the Duke had been soft enough to let him off. If all are to be guilty, Angelo must not seem extraordinarily guilty; if all are to be forgiven, Angelo must not be granted his wish for death, although, as he is both guilty and penitent, he is 'fit for death', in the Duke's terms, as Claudio and Barnardine exasperatingly failed to be.

Lucio at first asserted that Angelo was unusual, abnormal, in his abstinence and strictness—

> when he makes water his urine is congealed ice.
>
> (III. ii. 104)

One feels that most of the Viennese agree with him. Later they would no doubt have felt that if Angelo had confirmed their other argument (and Isabella's) that we are all liable to sin, or at least to the impulse towards sin, he had confirmed it in such an obscene way as to underline his singularity. But now the Duke succeeds in enforcing the fact that we are all alike, at the cost of a certain vagueness and even evasiveness, as he turns away from the fierce, uncompromising gestures of Isabella, Mariana and Angelo. There is mercy in what he does: his attitude is probably the only one that could contain the contradictory significances that seem to fit this exhausted little clutch of people—that all are alike in natural frailty, that all are singular, indeeed unique, in experiences and passions. There are, as I suggested, hints of a larger order into which everything that is decided may fit, but the Duke trusts it rather than invokes it. He is certainly not its master; his power is secular—perhaps we should simply say practical—rather than 'divine'. The order he actually imposes is the usual comic order, which leaves a great scope for disorder—that of marriage. Lucio, the Duke's rival as commentator and manipulator, is put in his place by being whipped and then married to a punk—yet Lucio's marriage is no odder than the other two. The joke is as much on the others as on Lucio, though Lucio will hardly be able to enjoy it. Does the Duke appreciate the irony of this? By proposing to marry Isabella himself, is he saying that the others should be able to do it if he can? That would suggest a new and rueful humility in him. Or is he stubbornly prosecuting his design of making Isabella feel some 'normal' affection and emotion? It is impossible to tell, just as it is impossible to tell if his final adjuration to Claudio is a subtle imposition of ordinariness on him (after his fearful experience of the isolation of condemnation), or is simply careless:

> She, Claudio, that you wronged, look you restore.
> (V. i. 522)

Juliet does not exactly want to be 'restored', because she does not feel that she was 'wronged'.

Baffled by the Duke, we are turned back to the other characters, isolated and uncompromising as they are. Claudio is exploited as a moral but largely unregarded as a person; Barnardine is ineffectually consigned to the luckless Friar Peter for further instruction. Angelo is exhausted and stunned but, in consistency with his earlier, more arrogant self, asks only for death; Mariana is bluntly assertive of herself but unable, if his life depended on it, to put much of a moral gloss on her need for Angelo; Isabella is reluctant to depart from her insistence on justice and from the awkward 'truth of spirit' that accompanies it, even while this is most desirable in the interests of mercy, about which she was so eloquent in the now distant past. Because they retain some certainty of self, and thus some self-interest, these characters resist complete submission to the moral. Each of them asks for a different response, a different comprehension, from us. They cannot be harmonized, and it is futile to attempt to do so.

La Trobe University
Victoria, Australia

Gray's Audiences

DUSTIN GRIFFIN

IN a number of his best poems Gray was preoccupied with the idea of an audience. By audience, I mean that group of listeners or readers, however large or small, who would on the one hand hear or read what he as lyric speaker has to say, and would on the other hand have access to his sensibility. We know from his letters that Gray was reluctant to publish his poems and yet very fussy about the smallest details of publication and anxious about their reception. As a recent critic has suggested, he was 'sensitive to the public exposure he both needed and feared'.[1] Often this preoccupation with an audience and its reaction is actually reflected in the poems, where Gray will present a dramatic audience which does not hear, or which he cannot reach, or which does not understand. This audience is thus a measure or concrete index of Gray's alienation, and alienation, as Roger Lonsdale notes, is Gray's characteristic stance.[2] But to some extent this sense of alienation, and a corresponding sense of poetic failure, is overcome when in some few poems Gray speaks in effect to two different audiences, one uncomprehending, and one sympathetic.

The problem of poetic audience is clearest in Gray's early 1742 poems. In the 'Sonnet' on the death of West, for example, Gray is characteristically alienated from the warm and fruitful world of nature (cf. the 'Ode on the Spring,' also written in the summer of 1742). The poet is quite literally imprisoned within himself and his feelings: 'My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine . . . In my breast the imperfect joys expire'. Not only is he cut off from the world around him; so is it cut off from him. His plight is made clear in the last two lines, where the cause of the anguish is assigned: 'I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,/And weep the more because I weep in vain'. The weeping is in vain because it will not bring West back, but more important because West, the only audience he seeks to reach, is unable to hear him. The poet mourns *for* the loss of his friend, but also mourns '*to* him that cannot hear'. Whereas the elegist traditionally aims to offer comfort or consolation to grieving mourners ('Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more') or to himself, Gray seeks in vain only for the voice and face of his dead friend ('These ears, alas, for other notes repine, / A different object do these eyes require'). What had at first appeared to be a funeral elegy is discovered to be a kind of love elegy addressed to the beloved. As Brydges first noticed, the poem is modelled on Petrarch's sonnet on the death of Laura, in which 'every creature' but the poet 'turns again to love'.[3] With some daring or unconscious candour, Gray has even borrowed terms from the vocabulary of seventeenth century love song—the melting heart, the expiring joys. The unusual phrase 'in my breast the imperfect joys expire'—a bold image of fruitlessness and unconsummated love—even seems an allusion to the Restoration 'imperfect enjoyment' poems about interrupted or imperfect intercourse.[4]

This intensely private poem may literally have been intended for West's ears only. Gray never published the sonnet, and there is no evidence that he ever even sent it to close friends, usually the most intimate and privileged of Gray's audiences. The death of West, long recognized as a severe psychological blow to Gray, was an additional loss for this very reason: West had in fact been Gray's first important audience.[5] As early as May 1736 Gray had sent to West his translations of two passages from Statius's *Thebaid,* and in the spring of 1742 had sent several poems, including a translation from Propertius's *Elegies,* parts of his verse tragedy *Agrippina,* and (most poignantly) his first mature poem, the 'Ode on the Spring', sent to West 'not knowing he was then dead'.[6] The sonnet was not the only poem inspired by the death of his friend. Gray's discursive Latin poem *De Principiis Cogitandi,* of which the beginning had been sent to West in April 1741, was taken up again in June 1742, just after Gray heard news of West's death. Having completed one book of the poem, Gray began the second book with an address to West under the name of Favonius. As Roger Lonsdale has remarked, these lines 'in fact constitute an elegy on Richard West':[7]

> So far had I, interpreter of the Muses, assiduously uncovered the secrets of Nature and first led a lucid stream from the Roman river through British fields. But now you, the inspiration and cause of such a task, have deserted me in the midst of it and have hidden yourself in the eternal shadows of death.

West is now a 'blessed spirit . . . released from cares' of the world, and yet Gray, as in the 'Sonnet', still seeks contact with him: 'look back on these tears . . . which, stricken with love, I pour out in memory of you'. But then the reality of the situation floods in: 'This is all I can do, while my only wish is to mourn at your tomb and address these empty words to your silent ashes'. The poem breaks off at that point, perhaps indeed because Gray now lacked an audience. He could speak only empty words to unresponsive 'silent ashes'.[8]

Gray's felt distance from West may have contributed to his first major poem, the 'Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College', written in August 1742. Again the poem dramatizes Gray's failure to reach an audience, this time separated from him (it is a 'distant prospect') by time, space, and experience. Strictly speaking, the poem is addressed not to a human listener, but to Eton College—its spires, towers, hills, fields (11. 1–20) and to Father Thames (11. 20–30). Later in the poem, however, all sense of an addressee disappears, and Gray reflects alone on the schoolboys' ignorance of human fate. Although his first impulse is to 'tell them they are men!' (1. 60), he in fact fails to make himself heard, or rather chooses not to reach them: "Yet ah! why should they know their fate?' (1. 95). As the poem ends, the poet is possessed of knowledge he cannot share. Alienated from the distant scene, he is unable to impart his burden, unable to make a community of suffering.

Yet even if the dramatized audience does not hear, Gray has another audience in mind—the reader of the poem. The 'Ode' was apparently sent to Walpole, who subsequently arranged for its publication in 1747, when it became the first poem by Gray to appear in print. Although interested enough in reaching a wider audience to permit its publication, and to inquire after its reception, Gray was ambivalent enough about being heard to publish anonymously and to deny strenuously his authorship to all but a few who were 'in the secret'.[9] Walpole and those few other friends thus constituted a kind of private audience before whom Gray might with safety reveal himself, and with whom he might share his poetic sensibility.

The 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' was also sent privately in June 1750 to Walpole, who had probably been shown the beginning of the uncompleted poem in 1746.[10] Gray's intent seems to have been to speak only to that private audience of friends, and he was ambivalent about the wider audience that the poem achieved. After Walpole had let the manuscript circulate, Gray wrote to a friend that his stanzas had had the 'Misfortune . . . to be made still more publick, for wch they certainly were never meant'. He goes on to specify the kind of audience he would have liked: 'I should have been glad, that you and two or three more People had liked them, wch would have satisfied my ambition on this Head amply'.[11] The 'Elegy' again dramatizes a speaker alienated from an audience. At the beginning of the poem, the poet meditates alone in the churchyard at evening, while the village ploughman goes home to food and family. The poet's imaginative sympathy goes out not to the living villages, but to the dead 'forefathers of the hamlet'. Again as in the 'Sonnet' and the Eton 'Ode' Gray in effect speaks before and about an audience that cannot hear him, any more than it can hear the 'cock's shrill clarion or the echoing horn', or can answer the 'call of incense-breathing morn'. At the end of the poem too Gray dramatizes a poet alienated from his audience. Imagining the day when he too will lie in the same country churchyard, he foresees that he will remain unrecognized by the country peasants among whom he decides to cast his lot. His remaining days will be spent not as the honoured village bard, but as a solitary wanderer who keeps to himself, and if he speaks, is only seen to 'mutter'. Not only will the villagers not hear him recite his poems; they will likewise be unable to read them, just as the 'hoary-headed swain' cannot read the poet's epitaph. If they could read the epitaph, they would discover not the eccentric they took the poet to be, scornful, love-crossed, care-crazed, but the gentle, generous man of large bounty and soul sincere. Ironically then, the immediate audience of the living proves to be no audience at all. They can not hear, read, or know the poet.

But the poet and the poem have another imagined audience, the 'kindred spirit' who may one day after his death inquire the fate of the poet. He is in effect the ideal audience: not only can he 'read' the epitaph, but he will understand and appreciate the poet's nature and sensibility, will be able, for example, to distinguish between a gentle 'white' melancholy and a black and bitter gloom. The poem's two audiences—the puzzled 'swain' and the 'kindred spirit'—may help to account for the 'Elegy' 's peculiar divided effect. For in one respect the poem seems bleak and despairing about the deep human need for remembrance upon which it is based. Like every one else, the poet relies on 'some fond breast' to mourn and remember him. And yet the fact that the poet must write his own epitaph is a sign that had no friend near at hand who knew him. Even for those who can read, the epitaph remains curiously private. The poet briefly describes his education and his sensibility, but then draws a veil over the scene: 'No farther seek his merits to disclose/Or draw his frailties from their dread abode'. He refuses to submit himself to the balanced account of vices and virtues. At such a moment all human audience is shut out, and all human knowledge of the living and the dead but partial. And yet in other respects the 'Elegy' is not a bleak poem at all. It effects a communion between the 'Proud' and the 'poor', between the living and the dead; all share the same fate, and all experience the same needs. And even the poet finds a responsive heart, the 'kindred spirit' within the poem, and the sympathetic reader outside it whose bosom (in Johnson's words) returns an echo to his sentiments.

It is perhaps noteworthy that the first version of the 'Elegy' (in the Eton manuscript) lacks that ideal audience. There the poet resolves to remain in the obscure 'sequester'd Vale of Life' to 'Pursue the silent Tenour' of his doom. As many critics have noted, Gray was later apparently unsatisfied with the mood of calm resignation, and rewrote the poem, purging much of its Stoicism. Perhaps too Gray was unhappy with the poet's obscure, unmarked, and unremembered end. Such a poet lacks all audience, and it was to the problem of audience—both sympathetic and imperceptive—that Gray turned in the poem's published version. A year or two later Gray was to give striking expression to the same reliance on just such an understanding audience. In the 'Stanzas to Mr. Bentley', not printed until after Gray's death and apparently intended only for the eye of Bentley, Gray wrote again of 'some feeling breast' to whom his lines might convey 'a secret sympathy'.[12]

The question of audiences has always perplexed critics of Gray's later poems. Though it was long thought that Gray was attempting to be obscure in his Pindaric Odes, it now appears that he in part wanted to be understood, expected to be, and was resentful at his failure.[13] Hence the derisive remarks in his letters—

> Nobody understands me and I am perfectly satisfied. If a thing cannot be understood without notes, it had better not be understood at all.
>
> . . . as to the notes, I do it out of spite.[14]

—and the scornful 'Advertisement' prefixed to the 1768 edition. Although he both needed and feared a public audience, he seemed to have no respect for it, no confidence in its understanding, or in his own ability to reach it. It may be significant that the *Odes* are addressed not to Gray's contemporaries, but in one case ('The Progress of Poesy') to the 'Aeolian lyre' itself, and in the other ('The Bard') to an English king dead nearly five hundred years.

In one sense 'The Bard' is the most extreme and spectacular case of Gray's alienated poet, cut off from an audience that is indifferent or even hostile to him. The poet's utterance sets him so at odds with his initial audience—the English invaders far below him in the valley beneath his crag—that he must kill himself. And yet the poem presents itself as a prophesy in which the bard is ultimately vindicated, and his oppressor punished. Hence the poem is both a defeat and a triumph for poetry ('To triumph and to die are mine'); the bard's suicide both an expression of his failure before Edward I and a self-assertive act that is finally validated by the poem's second audience—the eighteenth-century reader.

It is relevant to note that once again Gray had some difficulty finishing the poem. What seems to have held him up, Mason thought, was that Gray was not satisfied that 'the ardour of poetic genius' had in fact persisted until his own day.[15] But by 1757 he had apparently resolved his own doubts, as a letter to Mason makes clear. Commenting on ll. 133–34, 'And distant warblings lessen on my ear, / That lost in long futurity expire', Gray writes:

> Why you would alter *lost* in long futurity I do not see, unless you think *lost & expire* are tautologous, or because it looks as if the end of the prophecy were disappointed by it, & that people may think Poetry in Britain was some time or other really to expire: whereas the meaning is only, that it was lost to his ear from the immense distance.[16]

Or, in terms of audience, Gray thought he could now with some hope appeal to an audience that would know the Bard's prophecies have indeed been fulfilled. Perhaps more significant is the fact that late in the composition of the poem Gray added the chorus of Bards, not present in the original prose argument.[17] The Bard's 'lost companions' appear to him in a vision, and join him in uttering the prophecy (ll. 49–100). Can we perhaps say that here too Gray was in part enabled to finish the poem by imagining an ideal audience of kindred spirits, who would not only hear him but join with him in song?

New York University

NOTES

[1] Alastair Macdonald, 'Gray and his Critics: Patterns of Response in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,' in *Fearful Joy*, ed. James Downey and Ben Jones (Montreal, 1974), p. 180.

[2] *The Poems of Gray, Collins, and Goldsmith,* ed. Lonsdale (London, 1969), p. 69.

[3] Lonsdale, p. 66.

[4] Cf. Rochester, 'The Imperfect Enjoyment', in *The Complete Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester,* ed. D. M. Vieth (New Haven, 1968), pp. 37–40; and Richard Quaintance, 'French Sources of the Restoration "Imperfect Enjoyment"', *PQ,* 42 (1963), 190–99.

[5] Horace Walpole was the recipient of two very early pieces of Gray's poetry, some lines spoken by the ghost of Dennis sent him in a letter in 1734, and some brief lines on beech trees, sent in 1736.

[6] Gray's own note in his Commonplace Book. See Lonsdale, p. 47.

[7] Lonsdale, p. 322.

[8] Lonsdale speculates (p. 74n) that the 'Hymn of Ignorance', a satiric address to Cambridge, may have been written with West in mind as its audience, and have not been completed—it was probably left unfinished in the summer of 1742—for lack of an audience.

[9] From a letter to Walpole, in Gray's *Correspondence,* ed. Paget Toynbee and Leonard Whibley, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1935), I, 283.

[10] Lonsdale, pp. 103–11.

[11] *Correspondence,* I, 335.

[12] See Lonsdale for the lacunae in this poem's last lines, and the conjectures on the missing words (p. 155).

[13] Lonsdale, pp. 156–58.

[14] *Correspondence,* II, 508; III, 1002; II, 518.

[15] Lonsdale, p. 178.

[16] *Correspondence,* II, 504.

[17] Lonsdale, p. 178.

The Disunity of *Christabel* and the Fall of Nature

H. W. PIPER

IT is a tribute to the esemplastic powers of criticism that *Christabel* is almost always treated as a unified, if unfinished, poem and that critics demonstrate, variously, which of the three endings that Coleridge talked of was the true one. Yet the two parts of the poem, though only a few years apart, were written in different moods and at two very different stages in the development of Coleridge's ideas and poetic methods: the difference between them is the kind of difference found between *Kubla Khan* and *Dejection*. Wordsworth, who was in a position to know, more than once said firmly that at the end of the first part Coleridge had no definite plan for the poem—'not that he doubted [Coleridge's] sincerity in his subsequent assertions to the contrary',[1]—and both he and Lamb disapproved of the attempt to continue it.

The chief differences between the parts can be outlined briefly. The first part is a comparatively static confrontation of two figures that invite symbolic interpretation: the second has a good deal of varied action. The first part is set in an unlocalised Gothic world: the second is brought to earth in the detailed topography of Cumberland. The first part is full of ambiguities of situation and character, reflected in paradoxical imagery: the second is comparatively unambiguous and its two best images, the divided cliff and the snake coiled around the dove, are straightforward in their relation to the action. (Any ambiguity remaining in the character of Geraldine can only be derived from the first part.) Finally the first part is without explanations and, if a 'meaning' is to be given to it, this must be found in an exploration of the symbolism: the second part has full explanations, of a psychological kind, and is 'novelistic' in Northrop Frye's sense. Plainly the second part does not really attempt to retain the essential character of the first part and the differences are so great that they can only be the reflection of something deeper than a merely mechanical difficulty in sustaining the atmosphere. It is the purpose of this essay to see what 'meaning' can be drawn from the imagery and symbolism of the first part and to see what light the difference of the second part throws on the change of Coleridge's thought between 1798 and 1802.

In 1797–8 the major poems explored ideas or feelings of a religious kind which were important to Coleridge—joy in *Kubla Khan,* guilt and redemption in *The Ancient Mariner*, and permitted evil in *Christabel.* In each of these poems the setting plays a vital part in the working out of the poem. In *Kubla Khan* it provides a symbolic landscape drawn from already symbolic descriptions of a natural Paradise. In *The Ancient Mariner* there is a seascape which alters with the Mariner's perception of it and which is the expression of punishment and grace. In the first part of *Christabel* the natural setting is ambiguous in itself, mingling darkness with moonlight and glimmerings, inhabited by the owl and the cock (the birds of darkness and light), poised between winter and spring, and providing a final chorus in which the night birds rejoice from wood and fell. The ambiguities of the poem, and particularly those of Geraldine as she shows herself in its two central metaphors, that of the mother and child and that of the marriage bed, have been much discussed:[2] the more common conclusions drawn, however, have not allowed a great deal of ambiguity in the interpretation of the poem. Where it has not been seen as a story of evil triumphant,[3] it has been seen as an essentially psychological treatment either of sexuality and the transition from childhood to maturity, or of 'the psychological borderland where matters of religion overlap with matters of sex'.[4] How adequate these conclusions are will be discussed later.

A preliminary question is how far we can trust the symbolic organization of the first part. House concluded that the mystery was produced *ad hoc* 'at point after point . . . by . . . suggestions of slight distortion in behaviour, or of contrast, or of surprise', and that in the end these suggestions are 'all fragmentary', but, when the first hundred lines of the poem are examined carefully, it can be seen that the various themes of the poem, the ambiguous setting and the equally ambiguous suggestions of the mother and the marriage, are introduced and orchestrated with care and provided with hints and connections that only become fully apparent in retrospect. The opening lines of the poem are themselves paradoxical—the birds of night have awoken the bird of day—and a correspondence between midnight and midday is to play its part in the poem. The following lines link midnight and mastiff with the mother, and both linkages are to be used later to suggest some strange identity between her and Geraldine. Then comes a passage which is said by Emslie and Edwards to 'show a tension between what is expected by the inhabitants of the castle and the reality outside',[5] but which it seems better to take simply as the voice of the narrator establishing the antithetical setting, the night chilly but nearing May, the moon full but dulled by cloud.

With the appearance of Christabel comes the first hint, in her dream, of the marriage theme (and with it prayer) but the next emphasis is again given to the setting, with only parasitic plants green, the broad-breasted oak bare, and its one leaf a threatened survivor. Christabel herself is not described but with the introduction of Geraldine appearance becomes important:

> There she sees a damsel bright
> Drest in a silken robe of white,
> That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
> The neck that made the white robe wan,
> Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
> Her blue-veined feet unsandalled were,
> And wildly glittered here and there
> The gems entangled in her hair.

There are two immediate links, muted though they may be at this point, one between the white robe and the mother's shroud at which the mastiff howls (and both Geraldine and the mother hear the midnight castle bell), and the other between the apparition that 'shadowy in the moonlight shone' and the glimmerings that light the setting of the poem. There is another important aspect of her appearance. The strangeness, the brightness and the shadowiness, and the wild glitter of the jewels are warnings that this is no ordinary mortal, if a mortal at all. In his article 'The Quantock Christabel' J. Adlard has pointed out a number of Somerset superstitions which indicate that Geraldine comes from the old world of Fairy, and among these indications are her white robe and white palfrey, and the white horses of her companions. This suggestion seems clearly right, for the superstition went well beyond Somerset; the Elf-Queens and their attendants in the Scottish Ballads rode on milk-white steeds.[7] Geraldine then is eldritch, like the lady bright who appeared by moonlight in the poem from which Christabel came, Percy's 'Sir Cauline', and eldritch beings, though dangerous to mortals and unmoral, are not simply evil, much less vampires.

It is time to examine the character of Geraldine in relation to the two metaphors of mother and marriage and in her relationship to the things and setting of the poem. The first point of relationship is made when the mastiff bitch moans at her presence. 'What can ail the mastiff bitch?' Clearly something related to the midnight presence of my lady, the mother. But the chief connections come in the central episode when Geraldine can summon the mother with a wish, dismiss her, take her place for her 'hour', and be revived by the wine she has prepared. It is as some kind of surrogate for the mother, appointed apparently by 'those who live in upper sky', that Geraldine has her power, and the nature of this power is at the centre of the mystery of the poem.

Coleridge had already seen, in reviewing *The Monk*, that this question of power is central to the moral meaning of the Gothic mode. A romance, he wrote, is 'incapable of exemplifying a moral truth. . . . Human prudence can oppose no sufficient shield to the power and cunning of supernatural beings. . . . The praise which a romance can claim is simply that of having given pleasure during its perusal'.[8] If at this time Coleridge himself wrote a Gothic poem, it should be because he believed that despite the supernatural power displayed there was in it some real moral question. Certainly the power of evil was a difficult one for a necessitarian like Coleridge, who believed that

God was omnific and that all evil was ultimately subservient to good,[9] and it is possible to see this as justifying Bostetter's conclusion (argued chiefly from the second part) that 'Geraldine is an incarnation of sadism' and that 'all these characteristics [her shame, dread, love and pity] are quite compatible with, in fact conducive to, the conception of Geraldine as the instrument used by 'Eternal Strength and Wisdom' to torture and test Christabel for its own inscrutable purposes'.[10] But the ambiguity of the poem tells against such a conclusion. It is hard to believe that Geraldine's identification with the mother is wholly ironical, and, more importantly, such a view fails to explain Christabel's own reaction to Geraldine's hour. The reaction will be discussed more fully later, but clearly there is enlightenment and joy in it as well as suffering. Geraldine's power does seem to come from above and Bostetter does state (and perhaps overstate) one side of the question, but it is obviously not the whole.

The couching together of Geraldine and Christabel is equally ambiguous. Christabel's first invitation to the couching, her carrying Geraldine over the threshold, bridegroom fashion, and the mother's vow that she would hear the bell strike twelve on Christabel's wedding-day (though it is now twelve mid-night), all indicate that this is in some oblique sense a marriage. Very remarkably it is Geraldine who prays before bedding and Christabel who prays in her sleep afterwards. Some commentators have assumed that Geraldine only pretends to pray, but this is not in the text: when Christabel turns to look she sees Geraldine bowed before the angel-lamp, and the latter's action in revealing her withered side is described as if it were a duty imposed on her by a higher power.

It is easy to make the assumption that the spell imposed on Christabel by the touch of the breast is some knowledge or intuition of sex (and presumably, because the breast is withered and foul of hue, of its disgusting aspects), but this is unlikely. This is not an actual marriage but a metaphor; that the marriage should be a metaphor for a marriage is too simple a reduction. Christabel marries symbolically with the whole meaning of Geraldine and Coleridge was surely right to resent the suggestion that she was simply a man in disguise. Yet this is the final implication of the sexual initiation theories.

Both these interpretations and these which lean towards martyrdom as the explanation of the mystery look for support from Coleridge's later statement[11] that the original inspiration of the poem might have been Crashaw's poem on St. Teresa—which is certainly about martyrdom and about sexual union, but both have unusual senses in Crashaw's poem. Saint Teresa did not in fact achieve martyrdom but union with God, and the central image of the poem is the defloration of a virgin as the mystical symbol of that union, a martyrdom of bliss. Now Geraldine is not God and Christabel did not experience bliss, much less the sexual ecstasy which here represents the spiritual one. But if Crashaw's lines did in any way inspire the first part (and Coleridge's statement was very tentative, the more so when compared with his usual certainty in doubtful matters) then Christabel is in some sense a sharer in Geraldine's knowledge, experience and condition. This would be the normal way to interpret the metaphor of marriage as union.

There was in Coleridge's own earlier poetry a martyr-saint in Joan of Arc, whose reaction to 'a world of sin' is very similar to Christabel's reaction to Geraldine's hour. Joan too dreams with open eyes a fearful dream, and she too weeps and is calmed by knowing her guardian angel near, though she does so in worse verse.

> Ah! suffering to the height of what was suffered,
> Stung with too keen a sympathy, the Maid
> Brooded with moving lips, mute, startful, dark!
> And now her flushed tumultuous features shot
> Such strange vivacity, as fires the eye
> Of Misery fancy-crazed! and now once more
> Naked and void, and fixed, and all within
> The unquiet silence of confused thought
> And shapeless feelings. For a mighty hand
> Was strong upon her . . .
> Yea, swallowed up in the ominous dream, she sate
> Ghastly as broad-eyed Slumber! a dim anguish
> Breathed from her look! and still with pant and sob,

Inly she toiled to flee, and still subdued,
Felt an inevitable Presence near.
(*The Destiny of Nations,* 11. 253–71)

Allowing for differences in the power of the poetry and in the subtlety of insight, this is Christabel's experience. Whether that also would have led to martyrdom is very uncertain, for Christabel's experience was of something less easily remedied than the state of France. Joan had come to learn the evil in the world through meeting the suffering of war. What Christabel learned was something whose meaning is to be sought in the character of Geraldine.

Geraldine's nature must be seen as springing from the whole setting of this part of the poem, from what Coleridge intuited in the landscape of his moonlight walks with Dorothy, a landscape of delayed spring, the only green in the brambles and hollies and the moss at the roots of the bare oak which pointed its finger to the clouded moon, the chilly night, the dancing of the withered leaf, and the disturbed night birds,[12] all of which he associated with the contrast between the daylight and the moonlight women of 'Sir Cauline'. Geraldine is the being with whom the natural things of the poem show affinity. She appears mysteriously in the moonlight landscape; fire responds to her ambiguously, the open fire burning bright and the lamp-flame dim; the mastiff and the owls recognise her power in their various ways; and when the owls celebrate her hour they do so from the wide natural landscape, 'from cliff and tower . . . from wood and fell'. As an eldritch being she is neither human nor non-human, and she can be seen as representing the complex, darker-sided Nature of the setting, though still, the metaphors insist, both mother Nature and the Nature which we must wed to us,[13] even if here she brings a doubtful dower.

As a moral being she shows the same ambiguity, unable to pray to the Virgin but able to pray to a more anonymous power, her body disfigured by the marks of shame and sorrow, mingling beauty and foulness, a 'mother' who is a worker of harms, bringing a meeting that is a midnight opposite of human marriage and an experience which means that 'a star hath set, a star hath risen'. She is part of an order ordained in upper sky but it is an order that has in it more things than are dreamed of in Wordsworthian Nature's holy plan. The natural world was important to both Coleridge and Wordsworth as at once the symbol and the language of the benevolent divinity in Nature, but the Nature which Wordsworth was soon to describe in, say, 'Lines Written in Early Spring', is not the Nature of *Christabel.* Coleridge was, in the end, optimistic. 'In my calmer moments I have the firmest faith that all things work together for good', he wrote, and the owls do awaken the cock, the spring will come, and the saints will aid, 'but meanwhile it seems a long and dark process'.[14] In his 'Wordsworth in the Tropics' Aldous Huxley remarked that 'Nature, even in the temperate zone, is always alien and inhuman, and occasionally diabolic',[15] and, without going quite so far, the first part of *Christabel* shows a far less comfortable vision of Nature, with far more intuition of the possible evil in it, than was Wordsworth's at that time.

This marks a considerable development in Coleridge's poetic vision of Nature. In the conversation poems Nature is benevolent to the point of blandness and 'no sound is dissonant which tells of Life'. In *Kubla Khan,* though something darker appears in the chasm, the emphasis is on Paradisal beauty and the joy it represents. In *The Ancient Mariner* the forces of Nature are sometimes terrifying and sometimes full of beauty and joy, but always moral in their purposes. In *Christabel* both the natural setting and the character of Geraldine call into question the moral purposes of the natural order. Just as Joan's understanding of suffering is not only a call to martyrdom but an experience which troubles the depths of her being, so Christabel's contact with Geraldine's mystery brings a fearful dream of tears, sudden smiles, vision and prayer, which she can only resolve herself (though, like Joan, with the help of her guardian spirit). Her task was Coleridge's, to find how to 'redeem Nature from the generall curse'.[16] Christabel has been compared with Blake's Thel, but what she has to resolve is something more than dawning sexuality. The poem itself has been treated as a reconciliation of opposites, but the opposites are blended in wintry and benighted Nature and can only be reconciled in Christabel. Unfortunately the spring episode of *Christabel* was never written.

The problem of continuing *Christabel* was the twofold one of the moral purposes of Nature and of just how Christabel's fearful dream 'of that alone, which is', did also contain joy. The setting in the time just before spring and the description of Christabel's dreaming imply that both questions could be answered within the poem and in its terms, but when Coleridge came to continue the poem in 1800, he gave no answers. Indeed he moved away from the difficulties altogether. Coleridge spoke later of the 'vision' he had of the poem, but that he had lost the vision he originally had can be seen from the triviality of the verse when he came to redescribe the dream. Compare:

> Again she saw that bosom old,
> Again she felt that bosom cold,
> . . .
> The touch, the sight, had passed away,
> And in its stead that vision blest,
> Which comforted her after-rest
> While in the lady's arms she lay,
> Had put a rapture in her breast,
> And on her lips and o'er her eyes
> Spread smiles like light.

with the movement and particularity of the corresponding passage in the first part:

> . . . and tears she sheds—
> Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
> And oft the while she seems to smile
> As infants at a sudden light!
> Yea, she doth smile and she doth weep,
> Like a youthful hermitess,
> Beauteous in a wilderness,
> Who, praying always, prays in sleep.

Here the later-written description is in unevocative 'poetic' language while the other has an organic quality; words and phrases like 'wilderness', 'hermitess', 'prays' and 'sudden light' have implications that reach into other parts of the poem, from its early setting to the guardian spirit. Consistently, the mingled vision of the first part has become two separable parts in a conventional opposition.

This decline in the quality of the language is obvious throughout the second part. Certainly the image of the divided cliffs deserves its praise as an emblem of common experience, but most of the other verse that surrounds Sir Leoline is fairly ordinary Gothic fustian:

> 'And if they dare deny the same,
> My herald shall appoint a week,
> And let the recreant traitors seek
> My tourney court—that there and then
> I may dislodge their reptile souls
> From the bodies and forms of men'
> He spake—his eye in lightning rolls!

This is not very different from the stuff of the Gothic romances. Scott did it better.

Nature has little to do with the atmosphere of the second part. The change to the morning landscape of Cumbria means the complete disappearance of the night-scene and the night-birds that accompanied the eldritch Geraldine. Apart from lists of place-names, there are now only the mountain echoes, providing a simple, indeed comic, devil assisted by three sinful sextons' ghosts. Instead of the subtle associations that allowed preternatural power to be supported by the natural setting of the poem, Coleridge developed the character of Geraldine more directly and, at base, more prosaically. She became a lamia with serpent's eyes, identified with the snake coiled round the dove. Again a simple and unambiguous Gothic effect has been substituted for a much more complex one. For the mechanism of his story Coleridge turned, as he was later to turn in a different way in philosophy, to the powers of the mind. He had long been interested in an aspect of Obi and Copper River Indian witchcraft, the power to cast spells by 'workings on the imagination' of the victims, and 'in the progress and symptoms of the morbid action on the fancy', and he used it in 1797 to explain in his introduction to the poem the effectiveness of the mother's curse in *The Three Graves,* the merits of which he thought 'exclusively psychological'. In *Christabel* he worked this out more fully in terms of the heroine's passive imitation of Geraldine's 'look of dull and treacherous hate'. That 'forced unconscious sympathy', robbing her of all her other powers, completes her domination. It is indeed a situation of evil triumphant, but that evil is no longer metaphysical. At the end of the second part the poem has the makings of a chilling Gothic yarn, but it is not the poem Coleridge started with.

It is difficult to be certain what Coleridge thought in 1799 and 1800 about the religion of Nature. Some faltering can be seen in the *Lines Written in the Album at Elbingerode* (though the poem did not assume its transcendental form until years later), where the homesick poet found that Nature did not move him without 'One spot with which the heart associates/Holy remembrances'. On the other hand in this period he still professed belief in the impulses from 'Blest intuitions and communions fleet/With living Nature in her joys and woes',[17] and he still trusted to these influences for the education of Hartley.[18] But the difficulties lay less in his conscious creed than in deeper poetic intuitions. What Nature held for Coleridge in 1797–8 was the promise of joy. This is the theme of the conversation poems of that time. It is also the theme of the three major poems, but it is one of the marks of their difference that there is in each of these a recognition of the darker, more threatening aspect of Nature. In *Kubla Khan* the threat to joy is resolved away, and the earthly paradise restored, by miracle. In *The Ancient Mariner* the power of Nature needs the covert support of the Apocalyptic story to bring the Mariner from the Days of Wrath into a resurrection to joy and to the heavenly music, and it is impossible to say whether the beauty of Nature or divine grace is the more important agent of redemption, but there is never any doubt that Nature is moral and that it is the bringer and symbol of joy. But in the first part of *Christabel* the night-side of Nature is brought squarely under poetic scrutiny and the question becomes Tennyson's, in *In Memoriam* (lv), 'Are God and

Nature then at strife/That Nature lends such fearful dreams?'

Macquarie University
New South Wales, Australia

NOTES

[1] Quoted by A. H. Nethercot, *The Road to Tryermaine,* (1962), p. 25.

[2] Good examples are H. House, *Coleridge,* (1962), pp. 122–30; R. H. Fogle, *The Idea of Coleridge's Criticism,* pp. 130–159; M. Emslie and P. Edwards, 'The Limitations of Langdale', *E in C* (1970) 20, pp. 57–70 and 'Thoughts all so unlike each other', *ES* (1971) 52, pp. 236–46.

[3] E. E. Bostetter, *The Romantic Ventriloquists,* (1963), p. 8.

[4] House, *op cit.,* p. 130.

[5] *E in C* (1970) 20, p. 57.

[6] *PQ* 50 (1971), pp. 230–8.

[7] F. J. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads,* (1956), I 216, 323, 325, 339 ff.

[8] *Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism,* ed. T. M. Raysor, (1936), p. 371.

[9] *Religious Musings,* 11.106, 192n.

[10] Bostetter, *op. cit.,* p. 125.

[11] Quoted by Nethercot, *op. cit.,* p. 26.

[12] *The Alfoxden Journal,* entries for Feb. 17, Mar. 7, 20, 21, 24, 25, 27, Apr. 6.

[13] *Dejection,* 1. 68.

[14] *The Watchman,* 25 March, 1976.

[15] *Do What You Will* (1929), p. 117.

[16] *King Lear,* IV. vi. 206.

[17] *Ode to the Duchess of Devonshire,* 11. 74–5.

[18] *Collected Letters of S. T. Coleridge,* ed. E. L. Griggs (1956), I. 625.

Villette's Buried Letter

MARY JACOBUS

> 'Is this enough? Is it to live? . . . Does virtue lie in abnegation of self? I do not believe it . . . Each human being has his share of rights. I suspect it would conduce to the happiness and welfare of all, if each knew his allotment, and held to it as tenaciously as the martyr to his creed. Queer thoughts, these, that surge in my mind: are they right thoughts? I am not certain.
>
> (*Shirley* 1849, X)

Caroline Helstone's plea for the inalienable rights of self, in *Shirley,* I take to be the starting point of *Villette* (1853)—a novel in which repression returns vengefully on the heroine in the form of a ghostly nun. But *Villette* is not simply about the perils of repression. It is a text formally fissured and distorted by its own repressions; concealing a buried letter. Lucy Snowe writes two letters to Graham Bretton, one 'under the dry, stinting check of Reason', the other 'according to the full, liberal impulse of Feeling' (XXIII)—one for his benefit, censored and punishingly rational, the other for hers, an outpouring of her innermost self. The same doubleness informs the novel as a whole, making it secretive, unstable, and subversive. The narrative and representational conventions of Victorian realism are constantly threatened by an incompletely repressed Romanticism. Supernatural haunting and satanic revolt, delusion and dream, disrupt a text which can give no formal recognition to either Romantic or Gothic modes. The buried letter of Romanticism becomes the discourse of the Other, as the novel's unconscious—not just Lucy's—struggles for articulation within the confines of mid-nineteenth-century realism. The resulting distortions and mutilations in themselves constitute an aspect of the novel's meaning, like the distortions of a dream-text. But there is more to be found in *Villette* than the incompatibility of realist and Romantic modes. It is haunted by the unacknowledged phantom of feminism, and by the strangeness of fiction itself. Its displacements and substitutions, like its silences and dislocations, are a reminder that fiction is the peculiar reserve both of repression and of the *Unheimliche*—the uncanny which, in Freud's words, 'is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression'.[1] Lucy's haunted self-estrangement provides a metaphor for the novel's alienation from its ghostly sub-text.

'Why is *Villette* disagreeable?' asked Matthew Arnold —'Because the writer's mind contains nothing but hunger, rebellion and rage, and therefore that is all she can, in fact put into her book'.[2] The same qualities inspire Kate Millett's polemicizing of *Villette* as a radical-feminist text ('one long meditation on a prison break').[3] Arnold and Millett are alike in proposing an unmediated relationship between author and work. It is easy to dismiss this collapsing of Charlotte Brontë and her fictional creation, Lucy Snowe; in her letters the novelist writes punitively of her heroine, 'I can hardly express what subtlety of thought made me decide upon giving here a cold name' and 'I am not leniently disposed towards Miss *Frost* . . . I never meant to appoint her lines in pleasant places'.[4] Yet the assumption that autobiographical release fuels the novel is natural enough, and not only because the letters evince the same straining after dissociation as the novel itself. For *Villette*, belonging as it appears to do to the tradition of the *roman personnel* (the lived fiction), invites its readers to make just such a covert identification between Charlotte Brontë and her creation—and then frustrates it. The novel's real oddity lies in perversely withholding its true subject, Lucy Snowe, by an act of repression which mimics hers. Her invisibility is more than evasive; it is devious. Lucy lies to us. Her deliberate ruses, omissions, and falsifications break the unwritten contract of first-person narrative (the confidence between reader and 'I') and unsettle our faith in the reliability of the text. 'I, Lucy Snowe, plead guiltless of that curse, an overheated and discursive imagination' (II), she tells us; but the same sentence goes on to speak of the infant Paulina's incommensurately powerful grief 'haunting' the room—as Lucy herself will later be haunted by the 'discursive' imagination she denies. 'I, Lucy Snowe, was calm', she insists again, after a heart-rending account of Paulina's parting from her father (disclosing the lie): 'she dropped on her knees at a chair with a cry—"Papa!" It was low and long; a sort of "Why hast thou forsaken me?"' (III). Riven with such contradictions, Lucy's narrative calls itself in question by forcing us to misread it. 'I seemed to hold two lives—the life of thought, and that of reality' (VIII), she tells us later; the hidden life of thought strives ceaselessly to evade her censorship in the very language she uses: that of supernatural haunting and the Christian Passion—the product of an inverted martyrdom in which Lucy renounces her share of rights instead of cleaving to them.

At the start of the novel, Lucy observes and narrates another's drama, the diminutive Paulina's. Of her own painful circumstances we learn only that she has been shipwrecked in the metaphoric tempest which recurs at moments of crisis through the novel ('To this hour, when I have the nightmare, it repeats the rush and saltiness of briny waves in my throat, and their icy pressure on my lungs', IV). Paulina's grief—that of the abandoned child cast among strangers—has in any case already acted out Lucy's. Asking no pity for herself, Lucy earlier had invoked it for her surrogate: '"How will she get through this world, or battle with this life? How will she bear the shocks and repulses, the humiliations and desolations . . .?"' (III). So, too, Paulina's premature love for the adolescent Graham Bretton is at once a displacement and a prefiguration of Lucy's future relationship with him; just as, later, Miss Marchmont's state of erotic arrest and confinement are annexed to Lucy herself: 'Two hot, close rooms thus became my world . . . All within me became narrowed to my lot' (IV). As the novel quarries deeper into Lucy's subconscious, the displacement becomes more bizarre. Confined alone at the Rue Fossette during the long vacation, she finds herself looking after a crétin—a creature conjured from nowhere to be her 'strange, deformed companion', an image of deranged self who 'would sit for hours together moping and mowing and distorting her features with indescribable grimaces' (XV). That the heart-sick Miss Marchmont and the untamed crétin, warped in mind and body, are aspects of Lucy's repression (as Paulina had been an aspect of her loss) hardly needs emphasizing. Her regression from child to invalid to crétin reverses to the point of parody the Romantic quest for self which is the real 'plot' (the conspiracy of silence?) of *Villette*. ' "Who *are* you, Miss Snowe?" ', asks Ginevra Fanshawe inquisitively—' "But *are* you anybody? . . . Do—*do* tell me who you are!" ' (XXVII). And again, ' "If you really are the nobody I once thought you, you must be a cool hand" ' (XXVII). A cool hand indeed; for Lucy's invisibility is a calculated deception—a blank screen on which others project their view of her. To Graham Bretton she is 'a being inoffensive as a shadow': to M. Paul, denouncing her in a melodramatic hiss, she is dangerously, sexually, insurgent—' "vous avez l'air bien triste, soumise, rêveuse, mais vous ne l'êtes pas . . . Sauvage! la flamme à l'âme, l'éclair aux yeux!" ' (XXVII).

Lucy withholds her true identity from us as well as from the characters whose presence as actors in the novel defines her absence. The most disconcerting of her reticences, and the least functional, concerns her recognition of the medical attendant at the Rue Fossette (Dr. John) as Graham Bretton. The 'idea, new, sudden, and startling' (X) which strikes Lucy as she observes him one day at the Pensionnat Beck is not disclosed to the reader until her return to the scene of her and Paulina's childhood love, the reconstituted Bretton household: 'I first recognized him on that occasion, noted several chapters back . . . To *say* anything on the subject, to *hint* at my discovery, had not suited my habit of thought' (XVI). Instead of declaring herself, Lucy prefers to retain her social invisibility—at this stage she is still employed as a nursery-governess. Her strategic silence conceals the private life which Mme. Beck's system of surveillance is at pains to detect, while she herself sets about detecting the clandestine flirtation between Dr. John ('Isadore', in this role) and Ginevra, much as she had earlier observed the love-game between Graham and the infant Paulina. The novel is full of such voyeurisms (Mme. Beck herself is scarcely more on the watch than Lucy)—exhibitions in which Lucy casts herself as an onlooker, passive yet all-powerful. Even when she takes the stage herself, during the school play of chapter XIV, she contrives to combine the two roles—at once spectator and participant in the sexual drama which she enacts between 'Isadore', Ginevra, and her gallant, de Hamal (between the 'Ours' or sincere lover, the coquette, and the fop whose part Lucy plays). Here the divide between stage and audience, watcher and watched, is piquantly removed in the interests of a more complex and ambiguous drama; Lucy also crosses the sexual divide—impersonating a man while clad as a woman from the waist down. In the same way, the frisson lies in Lucy's non-subservience to her spectator role, as the game of master/slave in *Jane Eyre* is spiced by Jane's insubordination to her master. Jane discovers a taste for sexual mastery in preference for the more conventional role of mistress: Lucy discovers in herself 'a keen relish for dramatic expression' and, carried away by she knows not what, transforms her part into an unorthodox piece of inter-sexual rivalry—'I acted to please myself' (XIV).

'But it would not do for a mere looker-on at life' (XIV). Lucy's invisibility is an aspect of her oppression: the actress, Vashti, is an aspect of her hidden revolt. As a middle-class woman, Lucy can only be employed within the home or its educational colony, the school; but that 'home', since she is employee not 'mistress', must remain alien. Though increasingly professionalized, the role of teacher retains many of the anomalies of the governess-figure in her differing guises (mother-substitute, educator, companion). The governess is peculiarly the victim of middle-class sexual ideology, for the only role open to her is that of bringing up children while marriage and motherhood themselves are paradoxically tabooed to her within the family which employs her. Economically non-negotiable (non-exchangeable), she is denied both social and sexual recognition: 'No one knows exactly how to treat her'.[5] Significantly, Lucy prefers the relative independence of remaining a teacher in Mme. Beck's pensionnat to Mr. Home's offer of employment as Paulina's companion; while Mme. Beck sees in Lucy's bid to marry M. Paul a threat to the economic and family interests on which her establishment is founded (Lucy will ultimately set up a rival school). Charlotte Brontë's letters have much to say both about the 'condition of woman' question and about being a governess; but this, finally, of the woman whose destiny is to be unmarried:

> when patience has done its utmost and industry its best, whether in the case of woman or operatives, and when both are baffled, and pain and want triumph, the sufferer is free, is entitled, at last to send up to Heaven any piercing cry for relief, if by that he can hope to obtain succour.[6]

In *Villette,* that piercing cry is uttered by an actress whose release of 'hunger, rebellion and rage' sets the theatre literally alight with its revolutionary force. Vashti is a female version of the central Romantic protagonist, the satanic rebel and fallen angel whose damnation is a function of divine tyranny (Blake's Urizen, Byron's Jehovah of sacrifices, Shelley's Jupiter):

> Pain, for her, has no result in good; tears water no harvest of wisdom: on sickness, on death itself, she looks with the eye of a rebel. Wicked, perhaps, she is, but also she is strong; and her strength has conquered Beauty, has overcome Grace, and bound both at her side, captives peerlessly fair, and docile as fair. Even in the uttermost frenzy of energy is each maenad movement royally, imperially, incedingly upborne. Her hair, flying loose in revel or war, is still an angel's hair, and glorious under a halo. Fallen, insurgent, banished, she remembers the heaven where she rebelled. Heaven's light, following her exile, pierces its confines, and discloses their forlorn remoteness. (XXIII).

Villette can only be silent about the true nature and origin of Lucy's oppression; like Charlotte Brontë's letters, it never questions the enshrining of marriage within Victorian sexual ideology, nor pursues its economic and social consequences for women. But what the novel cannot say is eloquently inscribed in its sub-text—in the 'discursive' activity of Lucy's (over-) heated imagination, and in the agitated notation and heightened language which signal it. Here her mingled identification, revulsion, and admiration are tellingly juxtaposed with Graham Bretton's indifference to the spectacle. We witness not only his lack of affinity 'for what belonged to storm, what was wild and intense, dangerous, sudden, and flaming'—for the Romantic mode which defines Lucy's own insurgent inner life; we witness also his sexual judgement on 'a woman, not an artist: it was a branding judgement' (XXIII). 'Branded' as a fallen woman, a rebel against conventional morality, Vashti is at once *declassée* and thereby permitted to retain her potency—a daemonic symbol of sexual energy created by a woman (actress/author) in contrast to the static, male-fabricated images of woman exhibited for Lucy's inspection in an earlier chapter: Cleopatra on one hand, the *Jeune Fille/Mariée/Jeune Mère/Veuve* (XIX) on the other (woman as sexual object or as bearer of ideology). 'Where was the artist of the Cleopatra? Let *him* come and sit down and study this different vision' (XXIII; my italics), demands Lucy—in whose scandalous pink dress M. Paul detects a latent scarlet woman.

'*Heimlich* is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*'. Thus Freud, for whom the uncanny in fiction provided 'a much more fertile province than the uncanny in real life, for it contains the whole of the latter and something more besides'.[7] Lucy's dream-like propulsion from one world to another—from her childhood at Bretton, to Miss Marchmont's sick-room, to the Pensionnat Beck, and back again to Bretton—makes resourceful use of this fertile province, suspending the laws of probability for those of the mind. Narrative dislocation in *Villette* insists on the irreducible otherness, the strangeness and arbitrariness, of inner experience. Lucy's return to the past (or the return of her past?) is ushered in by a nightmare of estrangement—'Methought the well-loved dead . . . met me elsewhere, alienated' (XV)—and she recovers consciousness after her desperate visit to the confessional amidst the décor of the *unheimliche*: 'all my eye rested on struck it as spectral', 'These articles of furniture could not be real, solid arm-chairs, looking-glasses, and wash-stands—they must be the ghosts of such articles' (XVI). The real becomes spectral, the past alien, the familiar strange; the lost home (*heimlich*) and the uncanny (*unheimlich*) coincide. Like Vashti, Lucy is an exile from the paradisal world of Bretton; even when restored miraculously to it, she cannot remain there. Its true inmate is not the satanic rebel and fallen angel, but the angelic, spiritualized Paulina—whose surname, appropriately, is Home. By marrying her (it is she whom he rescues from the threatened conflagration in the theatre) Graham Bretton ensures the continuation of the status quo. But their conventional love-story—child-bride taken in charge by father-substitute—is upstaged by Lucy's more innovatory and disturbing inner drama. In this internalized theatre, the part that doubles Lucy's is taken by a (supposed) ghost. Freud's essay on the uncanny offers a classic formulation of Gothic strategy: 'the writer creates a kind of uncertainty in us . . . by not letting us know, no doubt purposely, whether he is taking us into the real world or into a purely fantastic one of his own creation'. The effect of this uncertainty in Charlotte Brontë's novel is to challenge the monopolistic claims of realism on 'reality'—to render its representations no less fictive and arbitrary than the Gothic and Romantic modes usually viewed as parasitic. Moreover, as Freud suggests, a peculiarly powerful effect is achieved when the writer pretends to move in the world of common reality and then oversteps it, 'betraying us to the superstitiousness which we have ostensibly surmounted'.[7] The grudge which we feel against the attempted deceit is just that retained by readers and critics of *Villette* towards the nun of the Rue Fossette—in whom repression, the uncanny, and the unacknowledged phantom of feminism combine to subvert the novel's facade of realism.

A realist reading of *Villette* must relegate the nun to the level of gothic machinery; indicatively, both Kate Millett (for whom the novel is a manifesto of sexual politics) and Terry Eagleton (for whom it is a Marxist myth of power) ignore her ambiguous presence.[9] But just because the device is so cumbrous and unnecessary in realist terms—Ginevra's gallant dressed up for their clandestine assignations—it must have another function. In effect, it symbolizes not only repression but the novelist's freedom to evoke or inhibit the *unheimliche*; to lift or impose censorship. The nun thus becomes that phantom or psychic reality which representation represses, evading the censorship of realism as de Hamal himself invades the forbidden ground of the Pensionnat Beck under Mme. Beck's censoring eyes. In his medical capacity, Graham Bretton diagnoses 'a case of spectral illusion . . . resulting from long-continued mental conflict' (XXII). But as it turns out, the rationalist explanation is debunked by the fictive reality of the novel itself: 'doctors are so self-opiniated, so immovable in their dry, materialist views' (XXIII), Lucy comments with apparent perversity; yet the text vindicates her. The legend of the nun, buried alive in a vault under the Methusaleh pear-tree 'for some sin against her vow' (XII), is introduced early on but lies dormant until passion threatens to reassert itself. The first apparition—summoned up, it seems, by Lucy's love for Graham Bretton—occurs when she plunges into the vault-like depths of 'the deep, black, cold garret' (XXII) to enjoy his precious letter:

> Are there wicked things, not human, which envy human bliss? Are there evil influences haunting the air, and poisoning it for man? What was near me? . . .
>
> Something in that vast solitary garret sounded strangely. Most surely and certainly I heard, as it seemed, a stealthy foot on that floor: a sort of gliding out from the direction of the black recess haunted by the malefactor cloaks. I turned: my light was dim; the room was long—but, as I live! I saw in the middle of that ghostly chamber a figure all black or white; the skirts straight, narrow, black; the head bandaged, veiled, white.
>
> Say what you will, reader—tell me I was nervous, or mad; affirm that I was unsettled by the excitement of that letter; declare that I dreamed: this I vow—I saw there—in that room—on that night—an image like—a NUN. (XXII)

The sheerest melodrama? or a bold refutation of 'common reality'? Lucy's challenge—'Say what you will, reader'—defies us to find the narrative incredible or the author unreliable. For the reader, there is no knowing how to take the nun; is Lucy deceiving us again? A brief admonitory sighting marks her visit to the theatre (an unexplained light in the grenier); but the next full apparition occurs at a similar moment of high emotional significance—on the still, dim, electric evening when she buries her letters from Graham, and her love for him, in a hole under the Methusaleh pear-tree:

> . . . the moon, so dim hitherto, seemed to shine out somewhat brighter: a ray gleamed even white before me, and a shadow became distinct and marked. I looked more narrowly, to make out the cause of this well-defined contrast appearing a little suddenly in the obscure alley: whiter and blacker it grew on my eye: it took shape with instantaneous transformation. I stood about three yards from a tall, sable-robed, snowy-veiled woman.
>
> Five minutes passed. I neither fled nor shrieked. She was there still. I spoke.
>
> 'Who are you? and why do you come to me?' (XXVI)

Lucy here both hides a treasure and entombs a grief; does the nun confront her to assert their kinship? The third apparition—aroused to vengeful anger—is provoked by M. Paul's declaration of affinity between himself and Lucy ('"we are alike—there is affinity. Do you see it, mademoiselle, when you look in the glass?"'). The birth of love and the turbulent re-activation of repression occur simultaneously:

> Yes; there scarce stirred a breeze, and that heavy tree was convulsed, whilst the feathery shrubs stood still. For some minutes amongst the wood and leafage a rending and heaving went on. Dark as it was, it seemed to me that something more solid than either night-shadow, or branch-shadow, blackened out of the boles. At last the struggle ceased. What birth succeded this travail? What Dryad was born of these throes? We watched fixedly. A sudden bell rang in the house—the prayer-bell. Instantly into our alley there came . . . an apparition, all black and white. With a sort of angry rush—close, close past our faces—swept swiftly the very NUN herself! Never had I seen her so clearly. She

> looked tall of stature, and fierce of gesture. As she went, the wind rose sobbing; the rain poured wild and cold; the whole night seemed to feel her. (XXXI)

Natural and supernatural are brought ambiguously into play; the nun is at once 'solid', material, and capable of bringing about changes in the weather—'betraying us to the superstitiousness which we have ostensibly surmounted'.

Lucy's question ('"Who are you"') remains unanswered, but the nun's ambiguous status—at once real and spectral, both a deceit practised on Lucy and her psychic double—has important implications for the system of representation employed in the novel. The configuration of characters around Lucy is equally expressive of her quest for identity and of her self-estrangement. Mrs. Bretton, Mme. Beck, Ginevra, the detestable Zélie St. Pierre and the adorable Paulina, are the images of women (the good and bad mothers, the rivals and sisters) through whom Lucy both defines and fails to recognize herself, placed as she is at the centre of a distorting hall of mirrors in which each projection is obedient to her feelings of gratitude, rivalry, attraction, hatred, or envy. No other woman in the novel has any identity except as Lucy herself bestows it. The absent centre exerts a centripetal force on the other characters, making them all facets of the consciousness whose passions animate them. And yet this is the level which a realist reading of *Villette* would claim as stable, objective, autonomous, in contrast to the phantasmal subjective world represented by the nun and the Gothic hinterland to which she belongs. At this point one must acknowledge the powerful presence of fantasy in Charlotte Brontë's fiction. M. Paul, no less than Lucy's rivals (the images to whom she must submit or over whom she may triumph), is animated by a wish-fulfilment which it is surely justifiable to see as Charlotte Brontë's own. But far from detracting from the fiction, the release of fantasy both energizes *Villette* and satisfies that part of the reader which also desires constantly to reject reality for the sake of an obedient, controllable, narcissistically pleasurable image of self and its relation to the world.

From the scene in which Ginevra triumphantly contrasts herself and Lucy in the mirror (XIV), to Lucy's unexpected glimpse of herself in public with Graham Bretton and his mother ('a third person in a pink dress and black lace mantle . . . it might have been worse', XX), to M. Paul's declaration of affinity (' "Do you see it . . . when you look in the glass? Do you observe that your forehead is shaped like mine—that your eyes are cut like mine?" ', XXXI), we trace, not so much the rehabilitation of the plain heroine, as the persistence of the Lacanian 'Mirror-phase'.[10] Or, to put it in terms of text rather than plot, we are confronted by an image in which signifier and signified have imaginary correspondence—by a seductive representational illusion which denies the lack or absence central to all signification. The nun stands opposed to this imaginary plenitude of sign or image. Too easily identified as the spectre of repression, or as the double of Lucy's repressed self, she is none the less recalcitrantly other; ' "Who are you?" ', asks Lucy, not recognizing her. She is the joker in the pack, the alien, ex-centric self which no image can mirror—only the structure of language. Like the purloined letter in Lacan's reading of the Poe story, where the meaning of the letter (the autonomous signifier) lies in its function in the plot rather than its actual contents, the nun derives her significance from her place in the signifying chain.[11] She has one function in relation to Lucy, another in relation to M. Paul, and another again in relation to Ginevra. The different meanings intersect but do not merge; the threads cross and intertwine without becoming one. Her uncanniness lies in unsettling the 'mirroring' conventions of representation present elsewhere in *Villette*, and in validating Gothic and Romantic modes, not as 'discursive' and parasitic, but—because shifting, unstable, arbitrary and dominated by desire—as the system of signification which can more properly articulate the self.

But which level of the text finally claims priority? Pursuit of the nun to the novel's climax—the phantasmagoric scenes of Lucy's drugged nocturnal expedition to the illuminated park—provides an answer of sorts. The nun has by this time manifested herself in another guise, as the external obstacle to marriage between Lucy and M.

Paul; that is, his supposed devotion to the dead, sainted Justine Marie (and, with her, to Roman Catholicism) whose nun-like portrait is pointedly exhibited to Lucy by Père Silas, as well as his guardianship of a bouncing, all-too-alive ward of the same name. Her presence at the climax of the novel perfectly illustrates Charlotte Brontë's deviousness, the strategy by which her heroine's consciousness at once distorts, and, in doing so, creates a truth that is essentially a fiction. In this coda-like sequence, all the characters of the novel are paraded before the apparently invisible Lucy in their happy family parties—the Brettons and Homes; the Becks, Père Silas, and Mme. Walravens; and lastly, after an elaborate build-up of expectation and delay, M. Paul and his ward. Thus Lucy is ostensibly returned to her original role of excluded spectator. But there is a difference. This time it is she who is *metteur en scène* in a drama of her own making. First comes 'the crisis and the revelation', the long-awaited arrival of the nun or her double, Justine Marie—heightened by Lucy's anticipatory memories of her earlier hauntings:

> It is over. The moment and the nun are come. The crisis and the revelation are passed by.
>
> The flambeau glares still within a yard, held up in a park-keeper's hand; its long eager tongue of flame almost licks the figure of the Expected—there—where she stands full in my sight! What is she like? What does she wear? How does she look? Who is she?
>
> There are many masks in the Park to-night, and as the hour wears late, so strange a feeling of revelry and mystery begins to spread abroad that scarce would you discredit me, reader, were I to say that she is like the nun of the attic, that she wears black skirts and white head-clothes, that she looks the resurrection of the flesh, and that she is a risen ghost.
>
> All falsities—all figments! We will not deal in this gear. Let us be honest, and cut, as heretofore, from the homely web of truth.
>
> *Homely,* though, is an ill-chosen word. What I see is not precisely homely. A girl of *Villette* stands there . . . (XXXIX)

'*Heimlich* is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence . . .' Once again it is the living not the dead, the familiar not the strange, that becomes uncanny; not least because the bathos fails to proceed as expected. Instead, the transformation of spectral nun into bourgeoise belle is followed by yet another audacious reversal—a denial of reality whereby Lucy invents an engagement between M. Paul and his ward, a fiction whose basis ('his nun was indeed buried') is the truth of her own autonomous imagination:

> Thus it must be. The revelation was indeed come. Presentiment had not been mistaken in her impulse; there is a kind of presentiment which never *is* mistaken; it was I who had for a moment miscalculated; not seeing the true bearing of the oracle, I had thought she muttered of vision when, in truth, her prediction touched reality.
>
> I might have paused longer upon what I saw; I might have deliberated ere I drew inferences. Some perhaps would have held the premises doubtful, the proofs insufficient; some slow sceptics would have incredulously examined, ere they conclusively accepted the project of a marriage between a poor and unselfish man of forty, and his wealthy ward of eighteen; but far from me such shifts and palliatives, far from me such temporary evasion of the actual, such coward fleeing from the dread, the swift-footed, the all-overtaking Fact, such feeble suspense of submission to her the sole sovereign, such paltering and faltering resistence to the Power whose errand is to march conquering and to conquer, such traitor defection from the TRUTH. (XXXIX)

Is this Lucy's final and most outrageous lie? or, as the text insists in the face of its heavily alliterative irony, the novel's central 'truth'?—that the imagination usurps on the real to create its own fictions; that Lucy is essentially and inevitably single. Meanwhile, the self-torturing narrative and masochistic imagery ('I invoked Conviction to nail upon me the certainty, abhorred while embraced') speed her back to her solitary dormitory in the Rue Fossette, to the effigy of the nun on her bed, and the empty garments which signal 'the resurrection of the flesh':

> Tempered by late incidents, my nerves disdained hysteria. Warm from illuminations, and music, and thronging thousands, thoroughly lashed up by a new scourge, I defied spectra. In a moment, without exclamation, I had rushed on the haunted couch; nothing leaped out, or sprung, or stirred; all the movement was mine, so was all the life, the reality, the substance, the force; as my instinct felt. I tore her up—the incubus! I held her on high—the goblin! I shook her loose—the mystery! And down she fell—down all round me—down in shreds and fragments—and I trode upon her. (XXXIX)

The phrasing is odd and significant: 'all the movement was mine, so was all the life, the reality, the substance, the force'. The wardrobe mockingly bequeathed to Lucy by the eloped Ginevra and de Hamal labels her as the nun of the Rue Fossette—at once accusing her of animating the spectre from within herself, and forcing her to recognize its true identity.

But of course the narrative doesn't leave things there, although the ambiguous ending cunningly attempts to do so—at once uniting Lucy and M. Paul in their educational idyll, and severing them for ever. The final evasion ('Trouble no quiet, kind heart; leave sunny imaginations hope', XLII) was clearly designed to satisfy the conventional novel-reader as well as Charlotte Brontë's father. But there is more to it. Of the two letters she writes to Graham Bretton, Lucy tells us: 'To speak truth, I compromised matters; I served two masters: I bowed down in the house of Rimmon, and lifted the heart at another shrine' (XXIII). The entire novel, not just its ending, bears the marks of this compromise—between Victorian romance and the Romantic Imagination, between the realist novel and Gothicism. The relationship between the two texts is as arbitrary as that between the two letters; as the signified slides under the signifier, so the buried letter bears an ex-centric relation to the public version. This is not to say that the real meaning of *Villette*, 'the TRUTH', lies in its ghostly sub-text. Rather, the relationship between the two points to what the novel cannot say about itself—

to the real conditions of its literary possibility. Instead of correcting the novel into a false coherence, we should see in its ruptured and ambiguous discourse the source of its uncanny power. The double ending, in reversing the truth/fiction hierarchy, not only reinstates fantasy as a dominant rather than parasitic version of reality, but at the same time suggests that there can be no firm ground; only a perpetual de-centring activity. Fittingly, the sleight of hand is carried out with the aid of metaphors drawn from the Romantic paradox of creation-in-destruction. The tempest by which Lucy's earliest loss is signified becomes an apocalyptic upheaval prophecying rebirth as well as death when the time comes for her to leave Miss Marchmont ('disturbed volcanic action . . . rivers suddenly rushing above their banks . . . strange high tides flowing furiously in on low sea-coasts', IV). In the same way, Lucy's loss of consciousness before her re-birth into the Bretton household, later in the novel, is heralded by renewed images of Shelleyan storm—'I only wished that I had wings and could ascend the gale, spread and repose my pinions on its strength, career in its course, sweep where it swept' (XV). There is thus a profound ambiguity in the Romantic cataclysm which shipwrecks Lucy's happiness at the end of the novel:

> The skies hang full and dark—a rack sails from the west; the clouds cast themselves into strange forms—arches and broad radiations; there rise resplendent mornings—glorious, royal, purple as monarch in his state; the heavens are one flame; so wild are they, they rival battle at its thickest—so bloody, they shame Victory in her pride. I know some signs of the sky; I have noted them ever since childhood. God, watch that sail! Oh! guard it!
>
> That storm roared frenzied for seven days. It did not cease till the Atlantic was strewn with wrecks: it did not lull till the deeps had gorged their full of sustenance. Not till the destroying angel of tempest had achieved his perfect work, would he fold the wings whose waft was thunder—the tremor of whose plumes was storm. (XLII)

John Martin and the Angel of Death transform Lucy's premonition of loss into an apocalyptic victory of the imagination. By admitting to the incompatibility of the world of thought and the world of reality, Lucy at last becomes a truly reliable narrator—single and double at the same time. And by tacitly affirming the centrality of shipwreck, loss, and deprivation to the workings of her imagination, Charlotte Brontë also reveals the deepest sources of her own creativity.

Lady Margaret Hall
Oxford

[1] 'The "Uncanny"' (1919): *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* trans. and ed. James Strachey, 24 vols. (1955), xvii. p. 241. See Hélène Cixous's seminal 'Fiction and its Phantoms: A reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche* (The 'Uncanny'), *New Literary History,* vii (1976), pp. 525–48.

[2] To Mrs. Foster, 14 April 1853; see *The Brontës: The Critical Heritage,* ed. Miriam Allott (1974), p. 201.

[3] *Sexual Politics* (1971), p. 146.

[4] To W. S. Williams, 6 November 1852, and George Smith, 3 November 1852; *The Shakespeare Head Brontë: The Life and Letters,* ed. T. J. Wise and J. A. Symington, 4 vols. (1932), iv. 18, p. 16.

[5] Elizabeth Sewell, *Principles of Education* (2 vols., London, 1865), ii. p. 240. See M. J. Peterson, 'The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society', *Victorian Studies,* xiv (1970), pp. 7–26.

[6] To W. S. Williams, 12 May 1848; *Life and Letters,* ii. p. 216.

[7] *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* xvii, p. 226, p. 249.

[8] Ibid., xvii p. 250.

[9] See Kate Millett, pp. 140–7 and Terry Eagleton, *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës* (1975), pp. 61–73.

[10] See Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits,* trans. Alan Sheridan (1977), pp. 1–7.

[11] 'Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"', trans. Jeffrey Mehlman, *Yale French Studies,* xlviii (1972), pp. 38–72.

Book Reviews

TYPES OF AMBIGUITY

Shakespeare's Sonnets. Edited with an analytic commentary by STEPHEN BOOTH. Yale University Press, 1977; £18.

It is almost fifty years since William Empson, in *Seven Types of Ambiguity,* took a couple of Shakespeare sonnets and showed just how much one could extract from them, in the way of multiple meaning, if one ignored all the rationalising editors who had tried to pin the poems down to a clear-cut logic and punctuation. Empson took a lead from Graves and Riding, whose *Survey of Modernist Poetry* had tried out some similar ideas, in rather less memorable fashion. Stephen Booth goes a large step further by adopting Empson's still fairly *ad hoc* approach as the basis for a whole new method of editing, presenting and exhaustively glossing the sonnet sequence. His edition prints two parallel texts: that of the 1609 quarto, reproduced in facsimile, and a modern, 'conservatively edited' version which more or less returns to the commonsense assumptions of those editors whom Empson chose to disregard. The point of having both texts there for reference is that only by facing about between them—trying to make good sense of the poems, but not closing one's mind to their fluid possibilities—can the reader stretch his intelligence around their peculiar strategies of meaning. Editing the sonnets, Booth argues, is not simply a matter of weighing up the textual variants and settling for those with *either* the best pedigree *or* the most logically sense-making virtues. With two exceptions (Sonnets 138 and 144) the quarto is in any case the only textual authority an editor has to rely on; and its confusions, where they are not obvious misprints and easily corrected, often demand a kind of imaginative guesswork beyond the range of textual criticism as such. Hence Booth's decision to print both the quarto and a frankly reductive modernised version, and to leave it to the notes and commentary—more than two-thirds of his six hundred pages—to negotiate the gaps between them.

There is so much going on in these notes, and at such a variety of levels, scholarly and critical, that one hardly knows where to begin in describing them. Empson suggested that Shakespeare's editors, even when their emendations seemed wide of the mark, were probably responding to some simpler choice of meaning which may have presented itself to the poet's mind and been rejected in favour of something more complex and rewarding. The theory crops up again in *Some Versions of Pastoral,* where Milton's meanings are shrewdly teased out between the rival commentaries of Bentley and Pearce, whose insistence on the rational prose virtues—though it lands them in some absurd spots of argument—Empson finds oddly revealing. His own criticism shares something of the attitude which he admires in those sturdy eighteenth-century rationalists: a confidence that the poetry won't be spoiled if one prunes down as far as possible towards its emotional roots. By seeing what they made of the Shakespeare sonnets, in however bungling or blinkered a fashion, the critic can perhaps work back through the process of complex metaphorical shifts by which the poet eluded his down-to-earth critics.

Booth departs from Empson at much the same point as the American New Critics, who complained that he treated his ambiguities in terms of a logical 'either-or', while poetic language required a rhetoric of 'both-and'. Booth devotes one of his longest pieces of commentary (on Sonnet 146) to the case for a criticism which would look beyond the tidy, commonplace notions of logic and coherence, and accept the variety of Shakespeare's meanings as subject to no such cramping conventions. At least, this is one side of his argument; the other acknowledges the reader's inveterate search for a satisfying logic, and glosses the poems accordingly. At times the effect is rather too much like having one's cake and eating it. Booth has a great deal to offer in the way of straightforward interpretative comment, much of it gleaned from previous editions, though often with a novel or distinctive slant supplied by his own close reading. But to put all this down in orderly fashion is precisely what the theorist in Booth, the spokesman for a limitless plurality of meaning, refuses to do. His approach has this much in common with a structuralist 'reading' like Barthes's *S/Z*, which goes to incredible lengths in dismantling a story of Balzac, classifying every single narrative unit under various codes of meaning, and playing them off against the modernist ideal of an infinitely 'plural' text. Barthes has the energy and lightness of touch to manage all this without giving one pause to consider its sleights of critical cunning. Booth is not attempting, like Barthes, to conjure a chimerical image of the text from a vague conflation of 'classical' and 'modern' norms. Indeed, he is at endless pains to mark out the cultural and semantic horizons which defined the responses of Shakespeare's original public, and to make it clear where different responses are at work in a modern reader's mind. Yet when Booth reverts, as he frequently does, to the axiom that *on principle* there is nothing that a poem cannot mean—nothing too remote or improbable—then he is treading the same ambiguous ground as an adept like Barthes. His treatment of the Sonnets has critical ambitions beyond the impressiveness of its scholarship (which one can hardly deny), and the brilliance of individual passages of comment. It hints continually at the redefinition of critical purposes in general which the structuralists, and their American followers, are keen to advance. Booth sets out at a number of points to criticise the critics, and hopes in so doing to establish something like a revolutionised theory of textual criticism. There are in fact some marvellously lucid paragraphs which capture precisely the teasing balances of sense preserved by the quarto text with its promiscuous readings, and pushed just perceptibly out of sight by the modernised version. Elsewhere, without any obvious change of tack, Booth seems prone to more dubious subtleties of argumentation. It is at these points, more often than not, that the structuralist themes of text, plurality and semantic freeplay assert themselves most prominently.

Structuralist 'readings' are synchronic in the sense that they relate significant details from the viewpoint of a somewhat abstract intelligence which operates outside the limits and contingencies of historical understanding. Structural relations are thought of mainly in terms of a patterning of sound and sense which reflects, in more concentrated fashion, the organising principles of language at large. Saussure put forward the basic idea on which structuralist poetics are founded: that meaning is produced by the *difference* between signifying elements which, without such a differential context, could signify nothing whatsoever. The method has to its credit some remarkably detailed and cogent pieces of analysis, including Jakobson's celebrated essays on a number of lyric poems. Its principal weakness, as critics have often remarked, lies in the failure to provide a yardstick of relevance by which one might judge just *which* of the seemingly endless subtleties of detail are those that actually contribute to the poetry's force and grandeur. The trouble with all such 'linguistic' criticism is that it regards poems as pieces of language which lend themselves to high-powered analysis aside from all practical dealing with matters of background and context. For the linguist, the choice is more straightforward; he can either view language diachronically, in terms of its history and development, or synchronically, as an object of systematic study. In its literary uses, however, this latter method takes on a still more hermetic turn, and needs to be handled with a good deal of tact and forebearance if it is not to become too powerful a tool.

Booth is well aware of all this, and attempts to forestall such objections by providing, basically, two kinds of critical check on the wilder flights of interpretative reason. He lays down a clear enough line of distinction between meanings which were probably available to a good proportion of Shakespeare's contemporary readers, and those which only a modern approach—or a later awareness of language and style—could possibly find at work. His compound reader is therefore not the timeless and abstract intelligence presumed by structuralist analyses, but rather a means of *including* the altered historical perspective which disappears from the purely 'synchronic' picture. Although he glosses a great many meanings which naturally occur to a modern reader, and are therefore in some sense demonstrably 'in' the poem, Booth is always careful to pick out the kinds and degrees of anachronism involved. His approach is to this extent diachronic: it takes full account of the historical process—the changes of semantic and cultural background—through which the sonnets have come to mean what they do. Secondly, Booth makes a cardinal point of reading each poem as a time-bound *sequence* of argument, the full implications of which are discovered only gradually, as the reader follows its unfolding logic. As Booth remarks in his preface:

> A word or phrase can be incomprehensible at the moment it is read and then be effectively glossed by the lines that follow it . . . have one meaning as a reader comes on it, another as its sentence concludes, and another when considered from the vantage point of a summary statement in the couplet.

His notes are intended to indicate 'not only what words mean but when they mean it', and thus to discourage readings that 'treat syntax as if it existed in a static state'. This principle is constantly applied to ambiguities of meaning, grammar and punctuation which resolve themselves—or signally fail to do so—in ways that Booth is remarkably good at describing. Empson had already explained, in *Seven Types*, how the errant punctuation of the quarto frequently 'worked both ways' to achieve such effects of multiple suggestion. But Booth, unlike Empson, is taking on the structuralists at their own game, and his notes contain much that is of acute theoretical interest.

One does, on the other hand, come across passages in the commentary which shows a clearer, but not altogether clarifying, influence of structuralist ideas. Some of these have to do with the role played in the sonnets by words and suggestions which perhaps seem trivial to the point of insignificance, yet which ought to be treated—so Booth argues—as contributing to the total effect. There is a curious piece of writing in the preface which puns obsessively on this idea:

> *In*significant and/or un*in*tentional verbal effects figure largely *in* casual conversation and *in* good or bad workaday prose; they trigger our *in*stinct for making and hearing puns, and are often the unsought key by which

> we know whether a paragraph addressed to the gas company is or is not as we want it [author's italics].

Booth draws the lesson that 'such non-signifying patterns and tensions also occur in great poems', and that therefore 'a literary effect need not be special to be'. No doubt it is true, or at any rate wrong to deny, that every last detail in a consummate work of art contributes in some degree to its effect. But to go all the way with Booth's argument and admit even the remotest of chance associations would surely be to sacrifice whatever sense of tact and relevance the critic ought to provide. Some passages invite the well-worn objection to structuralist readings; namely, that they tend to substitute a sheer virtuosity of technical description for the sensitive act of critical response.

These problems come to a head in the commentary on Sonnet 112 ('Your love and pity doth th'impression fill/ Which vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow'). Booth is at this point steering such a complicated path between rival assumptions, none of which in the least matches his own response to the poem, that the argument becomes virtually a full-length essay in critical theory. More than any other, this sonnet brings out the peculiar difficulty of explaining the sense of achieved 'coherence' in a poetry which lacks all the logical, syntactic or semantic attributes of a well-formed argument. Booth makes out an elaborate case for the idea that such 'coherences' may exist at a level of largely inexplicit or undifferentiated meaning. Their subliminal effects may still be active where the words on the page, to a rational intelligence, 'import very little or, being non-syntactic, non-logical, make no specific or establishable assertion at all'. It is a fair enough point, and one which finds a good deal of practical support in Booth's elucidating comments, here and elsewhere. But it is not altogether evident that he needs to push this argument home with such an air of hard-put defensiveness and cunning. Readers of modern criticism are by now quite used to the idea that poetry belongs to an order of language more or less separate from that of statement and logical entailment. The rationalist Empson of *Complex Words* would perhaps want to deny such a principle, but his treatment of Ambiguity —especially his pages on the Shakespeare sonnets—appeals most often to powers of suggestion beyond the reach of any kind of logical re-statement. Certainly the New Critics, with their various rhetorics of irony and paradox, took it for granted that poetry was somehow exempt from the rational constraints of 'scientific' language.

It is not that Booth is merely going over old ground. His arguments are more acute, and his textual awareness more subtly qualified, than anything to be found in the writing of the 'old' New Critics. The problem is rather that he spends so much time and ingenuity resisting these shadowy opponents that the point of his commentary gets lost in the thickets of argument. This perhaps comes partly from his divided attention to the two parallel texts, and his desire to mediate between the two sorts of reader—the adventurous and the 'conservative'—which these imply. The effect is sometimes distracting. The notes have a habit of spreading out the logical implications of a sonnet, often with a rare degree of insight, only to conclude that a reader who depends on such fixities and definites is missing the point of whatever else is happening simultaneously. The conservative reader is one whose mind holds out against redundant detail—or 'ideational static'—unless it can somehow be harnessed to a statable rhetoric of irony, paradox etc. Thus Booth underlines the difference between his approach and the more institutionalised methods of the New Criticism. It is the structuralist in Booth who wants to extend criticism beyond any settled ideas of what is or is not 'significant' in a text; and who sees the ultimate challenge to such notions in the fact that a poem may be inexhaustibly resistant to interpretation. Wallace Stevens considered that a poem 'ought to resist the intelligence almost successfully', and Booth is evidently of a similar mind. Hence the emphasis, in his preface and notes, on verbal details of an elemental character—pronouns, prepositions, seemingly random phonetic patterns —which no amount of studied ingenuity could work up into a rounded 'interpretation'.

This makes the commentary at times very difficult to follow, as it weaves its way among the various tactics of reading fostered by the sonnets' intricate forms. The quarto text is a focus, rather confusingly, for both the liberal readings which profit by its looseness of grammatical construction, and the disciplined approach which limits its meanings to those which an Elizabethan reader would probably have seen. The 'modernised' text, in contrast, is edited with a view to cutting out many of the extraneous associations that a modern reader might be tempted to find. Thus in Sonnet 129 ('Th'expense of spirit in a waste of shame'), the quarto has 'proud' in stead of 'prov'd', while the latter is clearly the primary meaning dictated by the logic of the line: 'A bliss in proof, and prov'd, a very woe'. Booth adopts 'proved' for his modernised text, which is right enough from a practical or commonsense viewpoint; and further justifies the choice by arguing as follows:

> To offer Q's 'proud' to a modern reader is to invite ingenious speculations on the possibility that Shakespeare meant us to understand 'proud' as 'in a state of pride' *rather than* as 'proved' [author's italics].

Here it is the over-inventive reader whose options are closed off by a moderating appeal to the context and logic of meaning. The argument is difficult to square with Booth's insistence that *all* such casual or improbable overtones ought to be regarded as somehow 'there' in the poetry. The problem is not solved by the simple fact that Elizabethan printers had no typographical *v*, and therefore made *u* do service for both characters. Booth concedes that an 'ocular pun' on 'proud' may well have crossed the reader's mind, and indeed that the context of the poem lends point to such verbal by-play. In which case, surely, the note is erecting a full-blown series of interpretative puzzles where it might have been sufficient, and more to the point, to print what is clearly the intended sense and deal with 'proud' as a quirk of typographical history. This, in effect, is what Booth decides to do, but in such paradoxical fashion that the editor's reasons are lost in the critic's argumentation. It would simply be *wrong* for a modern editor to print 'proud' in place of 'prov'd'. The pun, if such it was, is now beyond recovery. When Booth explains his choice as intended to prevent the reader from latching on to one sense 'rather than' the other, he is again shadow-boxing with simplified assumptions which hardly bear on the practical questions involved.

These problems of method are closely bound up with the ambitiousness of Booth's intentions. If I have seemed to stress them unduly, it is because his commentary dwells on the gaps and twists in its own procedure, often with the aim of reenacting in itself the tortuous process of reading the sonnets. At times his notes are remarkably successful in drawing out the parallels between Shakespeare's obliquities of style and the way in which his meanings are questioned, qualified and subtly transformed by the experience of discovering where their implications lead. One of the best examples is Sonnet 43 ('When most I wink, then do my eyes best see'), which plays on the imagery of light, shadow, picture and imaginative vision. The poem's constructive ambiguity is such that the reader experiences the same 'sudden desire for certainty, solidity and a precise distinction between image and actual object' as appears to affect the speaker. Likewise with Sonnet 93 ('So shall I live, supposing thou art true'): Booth defines the central idea as 'simultaneous constancy and change, fixed identity and lack of it', and discovers in the poem 'a kind of stylistic double life' which mirrors the pattern of ideas. In his commentary, Booth draws attention to numerous effects of half-conscious insight on the reader's part which greatly enrich and illuminate the process of understanding. His scholarship and criticism are both on the highest level, despite the vaguely uneasy relation which sometimes develops between them. His notes often leave one more puzzled by the sonnets, and less patient of any possible solution, than before one set out to read them. But such, Booth would say, is the effect induced by the sonnets themselves, if one has read them aright; and critics are performing no useful service if they replace the poetry with tidy explanations of their own. His book is altogether a much larger, more generous achievement than the doubts and objections it almost wilfully provokes.

University of Wales
Cardiff CHRISTOPHER NORRIS

POLITICS AND CHARACTERISATION

The English Jacobin Novel 1780–1805. By GARY KELLY. Oxford University Press, 1976; £10.

Gary Kelly says that it was 'the *Anti*-Jacobins . . . who singled out the enemy and attempted to smear them with the mud of French politics' and that John Thelwall, among others, 'saw that the only defence against such a smear was to accept it as a badge of honour, because "it is fixed upon us, as a stigma, by our enemies" '. So in attempting to establish what really happened in English society in this period we are faced from the start with problems of narration, of fiction, and of characterisation. It is a major achievement of two of the novels with which Gary Kelly's book deals, *A Simple Story* and *Caleb Williams,* to illuminate the politics, public and domestic, of those processes.

Gary Kelly's intention, in this study of the novels of Bage, Inchbald, Holcroft, and Goodwin, is to argue that there are solid reasons for calling the novels, as well as their authors, Jacobin. Or rather, Godwinian: they are all informed—literally, given their form by—Godwinian ideas:

> Holding certain political and moral views is of course no claim to special attention as a novelist. Nevertheless, the very nature of some of the views of the English Jacobin novelists made them consider the problem of technique as something more than the problem of planning and ornamentation. In particular their belief in the 'doctrine of necessity', expressed in the principle that 'the characters of men originate in their external circumstances', led them to consider the integration of character and plot as essential to the nature of the true novel . . . The English Jacobin novelists all tried in various ways to achieve this 'unity of design'. They tried to show how their characters had been formed by circumstances, and how character and incident were linked together like the parts of a syllogism. The conclusion to be drawn from their novels therefore would have a logical truth and necessity which would make them

> simply the imaginative enactments of a philosophical argument. The English Jacobin novels were doubly philosophical therefore: they contained many dialogues, monologues, and 'perorations' on serious and weighty topics; and they were 'philosophical' in structure and technique.

It is an arresting thesis, but its promise is not really fulfilled. The book is full of information about the biographical, literary, intellectual and to some extent political influences on the novels, much of which will interest people who have already read them. But unlike Marilyn Butler's *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (a book of roughly the same genre: Literature and Social Ideas, not Literature and Society), it is unlikely to awaken an interest in these neglected writers by sharply altering the perspective from which they are seen. As I say, the book's thesis is ambitious and looks promising. But in his Preface Gary Kelly claims to 'have simply tried to provide the information necessary to read the fiction correctly and therefore provide for its evaluation'. There is evidently some confusion here about what kind of book he is trying to write. And on the whole I'm afraid the information, the thesis, and the novels tend to get in each other's way.

The discussion of the revised ending of *Caleb Williams* is a case in point. In the original ending Caleb died in prison; in the revised ending he clears his name and exposes Falkland, but only to feel himself the 'worse than murderer' of his 'noble' patron. Kelly begins by arguing that 'the import of the revised ending is optimistic': Truth can prevail, even against the combined forces of those who support 'things as they are'; the chain of necessity can be broken by one determined individual . . . contrary to the principles of the *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*'. Since the conviction that Truth can prevail is not in itself, according to Godwin, incompatible with the principle of Necessity (quite the contrary) Kelly would seem to mean that it breaks the chain of necessity as we have seen it at work up to that point in the novel: Caleb triumphs 'against all expectations'. But it is not clear that this is what Kelly does have in mind, because he also implies that the context in which Caleb's triumph should come to us as a surprise is the 'Government repression' which increased 'late in 1793 and early in 1974'. The ending *is* compatible with this public political context (he continues), but only if we take Godwin's purpose as being to 'communicate to his readers some of his own sense of elevation and passion in the persuit of truth' rather than to distort a recalcitrant reality. The argument so far presumes that the revised ending is 'optimistic'. But a few pages later, trying to account for the fact that Caleb himself certainly didn't feel very happy about it, Kelly describes the ending as 'a breakthrough towards recognition of the neurotic drive and guilt inherent in his own [Godwin's] history of rebellion', and a warning to his fellow radicals that (in Godwin's own words to the imprisoned Joseph Gerrald) 'Truth can never gain by passion, violence and resentment' and, finally, as a call for a national 'reconciliation, however remorseful, however coloured by guilt and sorrow'.

Sometimes Kelly seems to be discussing the relative merits of these often incompatible interpretations and approaches, sometimes to be committing himself to them all one after another. His argument witnesses to the fact which it refuses to acknowledge: that the significance of the novel's ending is intrinsically complex. And he is so determined that the novels shall be the very immediate expression of their authors' personal and political and intellectual circumstances that the actual language of the texts is seldom allowed to assist in determining the relevance of these various contexts. I agree that Caleb's guilty triumph over Falkland comes as a surprise but, like many other developments in the novel, once it has come it seems wholly plausible, even inevitable. How is that? The fact that the magistrate and quasi-jury (in this novel full of quasi-judicial hearings) finally accept Caleb's story and his characterisation of himself is certainly a vindication of the power of Sincerity and an instance of the Omnipotence of Truth. But Truth is plausibly omnipotent at this point precisely and only to the extent that it accedes completely to the public, even theatrical criteria of judgement implied by Falkland's belief in 'reputation'. The Truth is Omnipotent, certainly. But the extraordinary optimism of that formula is covertly grounded in the fearful ease with which it may be reversed, as witness Falkland's ambivalent declaration: 'Williams, . . . you have conquered! I see too late the greatness and elevation of your mind . . . I could have resisted any plan of malicious accusation you might have brought against me. But I see that the artless and manly story you have told, has carried conviction to every hearer!'

The process whereby people exchange characteristics and places with their anti-types in *Caleb Williams* can sometimes become absurd, as when Godwin refers to the 'well-known eminence' of *Tyrell's* 'intellectual powers'. Yet there is a more general sense in which the impact of the novel seems to depend on its being badly written. Like most of these novels, with the splendid exception of *A Simple Story,* it is usually difficult to tell one character from another by the way they speak unless they are given a regional or lower-class dialect. This uncertainty is oddly appropriate to *Caleb Williams.* It tends to make Holcroft pretty tedious reading but even with him there are some interesting effects. While any epistolary novel trades on the fact that every activity except letter-writing can only be described indirectly, the stilted language of Holcroft's letter-writers, in which nobody could plausibly describe any kind of intimacy, makes Coke Clifton's description of his attempt to rape Anna St. Ives, where the gap between language and action is at its greatest, both ridiculous and really shocking. And for physical sexuality to appear only in that perverted form says something not only about Coke Clifton and his ilk but also about the conception of Reason espoused by Holcroft and Godwin according to which any activity except reasoning is felt to be irrational.

Maria Edgeworth was absolutely right when she praised Inchbald's *A Simple Story* in the following terms: 'By the force that is necessary to repress feelings, we judge of the intensity of the feeling; and you always contrive to give us by intelligible but simple signs the measure of this force'. Gary Kelly, in the most effective section of his book, elaborates helpfully on that insight. Yet here too the fascination of the novel is very closely connected to an awkwardness in it, and in particular to the visibility of the join between its two halves, which were originally written as separate novels. Kelly argues convincingly that the conjunction 'resulted in a multiplication rather than an amalgamation of meaning'. For instance

> The transformation of Dorriforth the sensitive lover and guardian into the tyrannical Lord Elmwood . . . is a simple and direct one: 'Lord Elmwood's love to his lady has been extravagant—the effect of his hate was extravagant likewise'. By the repetition of the one word 'extravagant', a word which may be used for either praise or blame, Mrs. Inchbald indicates precisely the transition from the beneficent extravagance of love to the destructive extravagance of hate. The use of the single word indicates the even-handedness of the judgement Mrs. Inchbald applies to her characters, and at the same time seems to suggest a moral as well as an artistic logic in what might otherwise seem like a retreat into Gothic peripeteia.

That is nicely put. But Inchbald's eloquent formula also *is* formulaic. It not only is, but it reads like, a finely contrived hinge between the two halves of the book. And correlatively, though the story of Elmwood and Matilda comes to seem like a strangely plausible sequel to the story of Dorriforth and Miss Milner it never, in my view, ceases to feel also like a moralistic betrayal of the creative energy animating the vanity of Miss Milner.

To read the novel is to be in fascinating uncertainty about, for instance, whether Dorriforth/Elmwood (or Sandford) *are* inconsistent characters or *have* inconsistent, even schizoid, characters. And to put the matter like that may cast some light on the failure of Gary Kelly's interesting thesis. When he says that 'their belief in "the doctrine of necessity", expressed in the principle that "the characters of men originate in their external circumstances", led them to consider the interpretation of character and plot as essential to the nature of the true novel . . .' isn't he confusing two meanings of the word 'character', as personal identity and as figure in a narrative? We acknowledge the distinction when we call certain special kinds of people 'characters', meaning that they are like people out of a novel; or when we offer to describe the character *of* a fictional character. But Kelly's confusion of meanings is pertinent. For in 18th century usage those two meanings are habitually 'confused' such that the self is typically conceived of as, in Martin Golding's terms, a 'genre figure' in a 'narrative idea of the moral life'. One's 'character' *is* the figure one cuts in one's life conceived as a narrative in the third person. A life has the same structure as a Life. In a sense *Caleb Williams* is an attack on just this idiom, in the figure of Falkland whose life is an endless process of constructing the character in which he will appear in his Life. But Caleb's commitment to Truth is likewise to the production of a plausible story: unless he can present his story as a seamless sequence of cause and effect he feels he has no character at all. Furthermore, Godwin said that he 'invented first the third volume of my tale, then the second, and last of all the first', and one is seldom able to forget, as one reads, the way in which causes are being manufactured to produce those effects with which the author began. The awkwardness, the contrivance of *Caleb Williams* and *A Simple Story* are crucial to their particular power, the insight they provide into the social process of characterisation.

St. David's University College
Lampeter GAVIN EDWARDS

GHOSTS

Night Visitors. JULIA BRIGGS. Faber, 1977; £7.25.

All fiction is to do with apparitions. It makes the absent present and conjures the unforeseeable into the seen. The characters in a story are roving images whose force may permeate the everyday objects and circumstances of the reader. They are incorporeal but ungainsayable. Of course, there is a disparity between our recognition of them and of the objects about us. We don't expect Tom Jones or Adam Verver to come through the door, but then, they are *through* the door already. They penetrate; they impress.

So when I recall reading *Anna Karenina* on a train to Greece, *Anna Karenina* is a little surrounded by that journey, but far more is the journey imbued with *Anna Karenina*.

The ghost story, therefore, already has an element of the uncanny and the cunning in its relationship to other fiction—it repeats, intensifies and tightens ways in which fiction, ordinarily unremarked, works within the adult reader's imagination. It heightens both the consciousness and the loss of control we experience in submitting ourselves to a fiction. Reading a story is necessarily to be in a state of double consciousness: the scene about you and the scene within you both levelly *there*. The ghost story elides the distance between the actual and the imagined and collapses frail and cherished distinctions. In ghost stories the fictional *takes place* in the everyday: it takes space, and it is this usurpation of space by the immaterial which is one of the deepest terrors released by the ghost story. The dead are bearable when they stay within the confines allotted to them by the outnumbered living: grave-yards for material remains, memory for spirit. Ghost stories confuse these categories of place and kind. The dead go abroad and so threaten the living who have hoped to master them by placing them.

Ghost stories are to do with the insurrection, not the resurrection, of the dead. This element of the insurrectionary, the uncontrollable, has long linked the idea of the apparition with supressed and guilty areas of consciousness. Ghosts reveal hidden crimes, usurpations, and so themselves may become identified equally as authority or victim. Sometimes, as in the case of Hamlet's father, they are both. They may come as messengers from another world of completer knowledge or be refugees from the individual mind, evading its censors and its border guards to appear, like Banquo's ghost, as an unbidden guest outside.

Ghost stories are of two main kinds: those which unambiguously present spirits as actual and those which explore the cloistral intensities of a consciousness, leaving us uncertain whether the manifestations have any source beyond the psychological. During our own century the plot of paranoia has predominated over the first kind of ghost story: it is a secularised form which evades the problem of *belief* and thus makes it impossible to disbelieve. If there is no cosmology of heaven hell and earth, no purgatory, no revenants, no *system*, the mind dilates and the outside world becomes symptomatic and confirming. So one reaches the situation of Oedipa Maas in Pynchon's superb *The Crying of Lot 49* in which the mind struggles for system in a universe of redundancy, and glimpses it in Clark Maxwell's demon and in the menacing apparition of the Tristero. It is of the nature of such plots that, having experienced them, we can never definitively inscribe them as paranoid. They have become *heimlich* as well as *unheimlich.*

Stories of ghostly visitors are common back to antiquity and are found in very different periods and cultures: for example, ghosts as living dead men are common in Scandanavian legend (de la Motte Fouqué dramatised the story of Helgi Hundingsbana in 1818 just as he had used the Paracelsian idea of spirits of the elements as the basis for his water-nixy *Undine*). One of the most famous ghost story collections is *Ugetsu Monogatari,* gathered in eighteenth century Japan but using older material. From Africa, more recently, we have works such as *The Palm-Wine Drinkard.* It is tempting to see the history of the ghost story as the annexation of an essentially oral form by literature in the romantic and just pre-romantic period. Certainly the meretriciousness of much ghost story writing comes from the loss of a primary relationship, that of speaker and hearer, and the attempt to substitute for it an intimacy based on shocks and on the turning of the page. The silence and isolation of the reader are fresh resources for the literary ghost story writer but they are often cheaply exploited, rather than imaginatively expanded.

Julia Briggs subtitles *Night Visitors* 'The Rise and Fall of the English Ghost Story' and she places its heyday between 1850 and 1930. Her first chapter is entitled 'The Ghost Story from Lucian to Le Fanu' and it is the weakest in the book, surveying too easily Apuleius, Chaucer and the Gothic novelists without developing a controlling argument and with some dismissive judgments and bizarre exclusions. One would not guess from this introduction that the German romantic writers had made the ghost story peculiarly their own, both in terms of volume and more importantly in terms of the excruciated imagination which we find at work, for example, in Kleist's *Bettelweib von Locano* or Schiller's *Der Geisterseher*. Moreover there was in a good deal of such German work an appropriation of popular imagination and storytelling. Beckford in 1791 translated Musäus's *Volksmärchen der Deutschen* with its mixture of his own and folk stories. This is a period which does not interest Julia Briggs, though she does discuss Hoffmann briefly in her chapter on the psychological ghost-story. She is very slight and dismissive on the Gothic writers, more or less re-stating Hazlitt's objections. Nor does she take much account of any recent European theoretical work such as that of Wolfgang Kayser or Todorov, though she mentions the latter in her bibliography.

Once she gets into her chosen field however, the deliberate parochialism of her approach permits her a thoroughness and intensity of appraisal which brings its own rewards. She writes very well, with a deft allusiveness which is stimulating and exact. She has the patience to record a mass of reading in minor writers such as Arthur Machen and Vernon Lee (though in this light they loom large). She uses her reading with an admirable sense of the particular insight to be gained from individual writers such as M. R. James, Kipling, Le Fanu, as well as sustaining an awareness of how a form like the ghost story can register the shifts in feeling, the assumptions about life and death which underlie a society's awareness. She is particularly interesting, for example, on the ways in which the experience of the first world war undermined the 'artificial terror' of the ghost story. The common experience of bereavement invested the idea of a spirit world with a new poignancy, with yearnings as well as repulsiveness. At the same time, she suggests, the need to suppress fear increased farcical elements in the writing of the twenties. Her analysis of a Saki story 'Gabriel-Ernest' is typical of the way in which she moves nimbly to and fro between account and allegorising analysis:

> A naked savage boy who makes no secret of his hunger for child-flesh appears on a country estate and even invades the drawing-room. The inflexible and unimaginative country society, however, cannot take his self-confessed proclivities seriously, preferring to believe that he is joking, until, of course, it is too late. Instead of the supernatural here symbolizing a repressed desire or disguised impulse, the naked and bestial boy stands for unpalatable reality, things as they are, and the reluctance to accept painful but obvious truths suggests the way in which Edwardian society insulated itself from the less pleasant facts of life, an attitude perpetuated during the war.

It is a method which can convince only if she is able to show similar processes at work in a number of stories and she does not entirely avoid the wearisomeness of the catalogue.

Apart from an imaginative epilogue largely on T. S. Eliot, she ends the book with a chapter on Walter de la Mare, whom she selects as the most subtle of more recent ghost-story writers because 'he uses the form to pose a question it is supremely well-suited to ask—what is the meaning of death, and therefore of life?'. Yet the meaning of death is precisely what the ghost story never quite includes: there is an evasion at the centre of the form. Revenants, spirits, are trapped in life, not death. These stories are generated out of the unquittable unease of the living.

Joseph Taylor in 1812 produced a bracingly titled work: APPARITIONS; *or the Mystery of Ghosts, Hobgoblins, and Haunted Houses, being a Collection of Entertaining Stories, founded on fact and selected for the purpose of eradicating those fears, which the ignorant, the weak, and the superstitious, are but too apt to encourage, for want of properly examining into the causes of such absurd impositions*. As so often, the ghost story writer here promises contradictory pleasures, which are never finally seriously questioned or resolved. Perhaps that is why the finest ghost stories, such as *The Turn of the Screw,* bring within the structure of the tale and the consciousness of the reader the impossibility of absolute knowledge, making it, equally, essential that we choose, and impossible for us to choose, a definitive reading of the text. The conflict is no longer between facts and superstitions, but within the uncontrollable energies of the mind. That is one reason for the decline of the conventional ghost story. Julia Briggs does not mention Conrad, yet in stories like 'The Secret Sharer' and 'The Shadow Line' (even leaving aside 'Heart of Darkness') he explored that collusive secrecy and that impenetrability which underlies the telling of all ghost stories. He and Beckett, far more than writers like Kingsley Amis whose novel *The Green Man* Julia Briggs discusses, have extended the forces of obsessional seeking and recurrence with which the living conjure their pasts, their guilts, the lost present, the lost presences of others.

Girton College
Cambridge

GILLIAN BEER

THE SOUND OF SENSE

Robert Frost: The Work of Knowing. By RICHARD POIRIER. Oxford University Press, 1977; £5.95.

Richard Poirier has adopted quite an extravagant rhetoric for installing Frost as beyond the shadow of a doubt one of the great Modern poets. He tells us, for instance, that 'sound and metaphor in [Frost's] writing, prose as well as poetry, are the loci of energies, not signs of meaning ultimately to be enforced'. Poirier helps the painstaking reader watch certain favorite poems 'read' themselves (e.g. 'The Silken Tent'). He demonstrates several times over in adept and often persuasive readings how the Robert Frost Poem in general 'manages to keep nearly everything to itself—or within the accumulated funds it shares with other poems—and is most alive and fresh in the way sounds and images spend themselves with and on one another'. Indeed fresh. By book's end I am quite convinced that 'saying things that almost but do not quite formulate is a central achievement of Frost's poetry from the first volume onward'.

But we'll come back to some of these ways of talking after a look at this central passage:

> In the voice movement of these poems, poetic processes and procedures and natural processes and procedures are shown to be intricately connected, and their possible reciprocations inquired into. Frost thereby explores the Emersonian proposal that in names of things there is a revelation of their metaphoric value. So, too, with Frostian sentence sounds, those units of expression within which words or 'names' for things are only a part. The metaphoric value of sentence sounds is that they refer to or are 'like' certain dispositions and temperaments of the human mind. These sentence sounds, to recall Frost's own claims about them, do not so much depend upon words as actually enhance or change the meaning of them. For Frost, a sentence sound is an example of pure form. A 'system' for symbolizing, like Yeats's, is inconceivable for Frost because for him the power of voice in a sentence exists independently of words and necessarily changes their significance with each usage. Voice or sentence sound is an evidence of human resistance to fixed meanings as well as to the impositional power of things or circumstance. The shaping of sound in a sentence is the voice's way of exerting control over particular words that become too intimidating, words like 'God', for example, or 'snow' . . . Frost had a taste for the sheer power of linguistic sound, and this helped make him a far more flexible poet stylistically and an altogether more daring intellectual poet than he is generally thought to be. (pp. 197–199)

If all that Poirier both says and intimates here is true, then Frost's verse ought to be edited anew, much as texts of piano music sometimes are (with 'authoritative' fingerings, phrasings, pedallings, accents). For so portrayed, this 'sentence sound' idea of Frost's sounds like a musical conception such as manifests itself in those phrasing and dynamics marks that are not the notes themselves but which tell the performer how the notes are meant to be sounded together. Have we got any such thing in the language of poetry?

Suppose we try out a couple of alternative wordings to the trickiest formulation in this utterance of Poirier's: 'These sentence sounds do not so much depend upon what words mean as, say, on how the words sound when spoken aloud', 'These sentence sounds do not depend upon words; they enhance and sometimes even change the meaning of them'. Now the original Poirier: 'These sentence sounds, to recall Frost's own claims about them, do not so much depend upon words as actually enhance or change the meaning of them'. The original Frost: 'A sentence is a sound in itself on which other sounds called words may be strung'. The idea is crucial enough, it seems to me, to have a foothold in the Index (restricted to names and titles in *The Work of Knowing*). But no matter how you phrase it, I'm not convinced these 'sentence sounds' after all exist. I don't see how 'power of voice can so exert itself over poetic words on the page, giving somehow a 'body English' to the drift of the words' sense. How is this 'sheer power of linguistic sound' registered,—in the poet's language, that is? (Saying what 'usage' means in the passage above could in part help answer this question, perhaps.)

'It is a matter of stress patterns', says Poirier and he sets out to prove as much with many pages of scanning demonstrations. ('It is the motion in the writing and the reading of Frost that I try to account for in this book', he tells the reader in the overture.) But those notations are after all only Mr. Poirier's sense of the accents, and I always find such trackings in poetic criticism at least incipiently boring for a reason that has something to do with the most evident difference between verbal and musical languages: the fact that words do refer and, however ambiguously they may function, they crucially play upon the expectation that they stand for some other experience even as they are an experience unto themselves. I don't think 'pure form' is available to literature as it may be to music, sculpture, painting. Dance and the speaking arts perhaps ineluctably reek of the human. But if sentence sound as 'pure form' is truly pure, how can it also have this alchemic power to change meaning anyway, infusing it with telling human presence? When you think of it, it really is an extraordinary leap from the claim that 'Frost had a taste for the sheer power of sound' to believing that this is one of the key reasons why he is also so 'daringly intellectual'. A simple yodeller could be said to share even such a taste.

'The metaphoric values' of sheer sound strike me as fascinating but pretty uncharted waters, as Frost was the first to spryly admit: 'The sentence sounds . . . are as definite as words. It is not impossible that they could be collected in a book though I don't at present see on what system they would be catalogued' (quoted in Poirier). At any event, it's a quirky lot to base the greatness of a career on. (Is this perhaps one of the meanings to Poirier's claim, then, that Frost's 'greatness depends . . . in large part on his actually seeking out opportunities for being in untenable positions'?) Anyway I thought that the taste for an index of the 'certain dispositions and temperaments of the human mind' went out with Pope's Humours.

I'm told that in the letters, Frost makes a point of distinguishing his interest in verbal sonics from Algernon Swinburne's and Tennyson's (assonance, consonance, etc.) by calling his pet 'the sound of *sense*' (my italics). But I don't see how Frost's desire to invest his lines with this 'sound' differs from wanting readers to feel that he's always 'on' to something in his verse, always. I don't see how it differs from sheer bullying your way through. That is to say, it still to me seems unflattering to say of someone that 'he loves the sound of his own voice'.

But Poirier is doubtless right to feel that 'voice is the most important, distinguishing, and conspicuously insistent feature of Frost's poetry and his writing about poetry'. What the inconspicuously insistent feature is we may be able to do without knowing anyway. But Poirier convinces me that 'interactions between "voice" and other forms of metaphor constitute the very substance of [Frost's] work', and that Frost's 'ultimate subject' is 'the interpretive process itself'.

And Poirier makes a very interesting story of the connections between Frost's poetic and the tenor of his life

—how behind Frost's theory of 'voice' and 'sentence sounds' there is 'a psychological and moral imperative . . . most simply described as a revulsion against the idea of human transparency'. How Frost was always 'communicating his conviction that, mysteriously, nothing happens to us in life except what we choose to have happen'. How Frost's tremendous desire to be in control prompted him to cagily design his public image and his own 'poetic progress', particularly in the early volumes that he put together out of a clutch of poems he'd stored up until he was nearly forty. How, most interestingly of all, such a poetic as Frost's specially capitalizes on the fact of consciousness itself, elaborating rather than lamenting what is unavoidable: 'this distinctly human capacity for "trouble" and choice . . . our ability to express a consciousness of the "divisions" in us and in things in nature which cannot themselves attain to consciousness'. How all this sets Frost apart from but no lower down in the pantheon than other great modern poets such as Eliot and Yeats—without, however, Frost's ever sounding 'like a big poet', at least when at his best. How Frost's 'positive attitude toward elusiveness of meaning', his 'resistance to fixed meanings', creates subtleties 'inextricable from an apparent availability', difficulties (a praise word) that are, in comparison with Eliot and Yeats, 'unique but equally strenuous', uniquely demanding that Frost's reader be 'common and literary at once'.

Lyndeborough
New Hampshire

JERALD RENEAU

ESSAYS IN CRITICISM

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF LITERARY CRITICISM

Vol. XXVIII October 1978 No. 4

Love's Labour's Lost and the Circling Seasons

JOHN KERRIGAN

WE are often told that the arrival of Marcade with news of the French king's death is 'the key fact of the play', for his entry, bringing death as harsh reality, destroys the lovely but too-artificial life of Navarre's park. And his arrival is reflected in the songs of *Ver* and *Hiems*: 'Winter is second, and final. The season of death ends the play, as the news of death had stilled the worthies. It is the final message from the forces that govern the pageant. "The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo." '[1]

Yet Shakespeare's owl (*Hiems*) does not, I think, refute his cuckoo (*Ver*); for in the tradition of the *débat*—of which these songs are a late example—neither bird wins. And, in fact, winter could hardly be 'second, and final', for if winter comes, spring cannot be far behind. Seasons are interdependent parts of a cycle, and each comes 'after' another. The 'maidens' of the spring song suggest this, for they 'bleach their summer smocks', eager to anticipate the next season. And interdependence is recreated by the way the songs are touched by qualities of their apparent opposites, making each seem implicit in the other. Hence the spring flowers are lifeless things (not at all like the daffodils that 'peer' in Autolycus's song) which, like the background of some Elizabethan miniature, 'paint the meadows with delight'. They live beautifully but without vitality. It is winter, the season of death, that is packed with energy: 'Tom bears logs into the hall, / And milk comes frozen home in pail' (the vigour depends much on the evasion of passive constructions, so that the milk is not 'brought' but 'comes' of its own accord, the crabs 'hiss' and Marian's nose 'looks'). If winter is cold, it also holds a blazing fire, for Joan has to keel (cool) the pot to stop it boiling over. The birds of the songs also hint at opposites within each season: the spring bird has a 'word of fear', telling of love gone cold, while the bird of winter has an unexpectedly 'merry note'. Indeed, the received reading could just as easily turn upside down: since the cuckoo has a 'word' of fear and it is the owl that 'sings', then the cuckoo is Mercurial and the owl Apollonian, and the last line of the play must be saying that spring comes after winter ('The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo'). It is Shakespeare's implication of each season in its opposite that makes one question John Wilders's claim that the play ends with 'unresolved and irreconcilable opposites', with no prospect except 'separation' (*E in C,* January, 1977, p. 32). True, the season songs reflect an unresolved action, but their interdependence also suggests that opposites reconcile—if only under the circling seasons, after the play.

Marcade's announcement of the death of the French king is, indeed, one 'key fact', but it is not decisive alone: just as winter is balanced by spring, so his message is offset by news of life—the baby bragging in Jaquenetta's belly. Seasonal opposition is being used as it was to be again in *The Winter's Tale,* with the poise of one season against another ('Not yet on summer's death nor the birth / Of trembling winter' IV. iv. 80–81) imaging mingled news of life and death among the characters ('thou met'st with things dying, I with things new-born' III. iii. 108–09). In *Love's Labour's Lost,* just as spring and winter are touched by their opposites, so are the play's messages of life and death. This is how the baby is announced:

> *Cost.* . . . she's quick; the child brags in her belly
> already: 'tis yours.
> *Arm.* Dost thou infamonize me among potentates?
> Thou shalt die. (V. ii. 668–71)

This may seem feeble on the page, yet in the context of a Pageant enacting long dead heroes it is deeply disturbing. It need not worry Costard as a challenge, but

Armado's threat becomes a *momento mori*: Costard will certainly die. As for the message of death, life is its immediate consequence:

> *Mar.* I am sorry, madam; for the news I bring
> Is heavy in my tongue. The king your father—
> *Prin.* Dead, for my life! (V. ii. 710–12)

This is poignantly honest, for when we hear our father is dead we feel most keenly the life he has given us. And that preposition, 'for', has some of the mystery of the interdependent and circling seasons: as spring needs winter for it to be, so does life death.

Love's Labour's Lost begins with four courtiers who refuse to accept the death implicit in life. They want to defeat sluttish time and live for ever:

> Let fame, that all hunt after in their lives,
> Live register'd upon our brazen tombs,
> And then grace us in the disgrace of death;
> When, spite of cormorant devouring Time,
> Th'endeavour of this present breath may buy
> That honour which shall bate his scythe's keen edge,
> And make us heirs of all eternity. (I. i. 1–7)

The folly of this is made clear by the imagery, undercutting the apparent logic of Navarre's proposition. 'Brazen tombs' is a stock emblem for the mere futility of an earthly monument: 'Exegi monumentum aere perennius'. Some, at least, of the audience, would know that Horatian tag (*Odes*, III. xxx. 1), the staple of so many Elizabethan poems (it's in, for example, Shakespeare's Sonnet 55: 'Not marble, nor the gilded monuments / Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme'). Navarre would cheat Time's scythe by excluding women from his garden, yet what does 'heir' suggest save bred succession (as Sonnet 12 puts it: 'And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence / Save breed to brave him when he takes thee hence')? The King presses on, oblivious to the ironies generated by his imagery:

> Therefore, brave conquerors—for so you are,
> That war against your own affections
> And the huge army of the world's desires—
> (I. i. 8–10)

Control of the passions is all very well (though the prolepsis of line 8 is revealing), but what value can we allow to self-control as drastic as self 'conquest'? Perhaps Navarre wants self-defeat.

His 'war' is actually rebellion against his kingly self, against his kingly duty to lead a public (not a cloistered) life, and against what Berowne later calls 'the kingly state of youth' (IV. iii. 289). It amounts to rebellion against the God given order of things, and the deed the men sign is appropriately surrounded by comic echoes of the Faustus bond:[2]

> *Ber.* . . . What is the end of study, let me know?
> *King* Why, that to know which else we should not know.
> *Ber.* Things hid and barr'd, you mean, from common sense?
> *King* Ay, that is study's god-like recompense.
> (I. i. 55–58)

In the defence of love which follows, Berowne plays with the impiety of the King's word (and the King's oath, through the play's exploration of the word 'word', turns out to be only his word).[3] He starts to bless Navarre's word with the imagery of *John* I, declaring that study is the search to find 'the light of truth', and 'where light in darkness lies'; but, deftly exploiting the overlap between Renaissance neoplatonism and *John,* he turns this search into the adoration of Apollo (anticipating IV. iii. 338–41).[4] Since, in the courtly and Petrarchan idiom of Navarre, women's eyes are like nothing so much as the sun, it follows that gazing into the eyes of a woman is by any standards a pious and studious search for the truth (I. i. 72–93). It is a brilliant display, but self-belying, for as the King remarks: 'How well he's read, to reason against reading!' (I. i. 94). It is the anti-academicism of the academic, and an attack on the word that is limited because based on the values of the word. He treats his own oath in the same way, evading it by verbal trickery: 'By yea and nay, sir', he swears, and 'I am the last that will last keep his oath' (last to hang on to it, or last to put it into effect?). For all this cleverness Berowne could not dispute with spring and winter: his verbal superficiality is quietly placed by the suggestion of those deeper rhythms in this pre-echo of *Ver* and *Hiems,* which he speaks himself:

> At Christmas I no more desire a rose
> Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled shows;
> But like of each thing that in season grows.
> (I. i. 105–07)

The completeness of the circling seasons can never be learned in study, and it is not until the men leave their 'academe' that they can pursue the educational ideal of the 'complete man' effectively. Then, indeed, they are taught by the circling seasons, by *Ver* and *Hiems,* for the Princess will have them 'stay, until the twelve celestial signs/Have brought about the annual reckoning' (V. ii. 789).

If Berowne's criticism of the King's word recoils because it is merely based on the word, Costard's is more subversive, appealing to the flesh. Yet the clown is like the courtier in using a religious idiom to make his point: 'it is the manner of a man to speak to a woman . . . Such is the simplicity of man to hearken after the flesh' (I. i. 206, 215). Navarre can't be exempt from this just because of his rank, as Dull recognises when he addresses the man rather than the crown: 'I would see his own person in flesh and blood' (I. i. 183). Navarre wants a prelapsarian garden, but the low characters recognise, in their wisdom, that man has fallen into the flesh. Thoughts of Eden are encouraged as Armado's letter is read out, for Jaquenetta is 'a child of our grandmother Eve, a female . . . the weaker vessel' (I. i. 257, 265), and since a 'costard' is an apple one could say that the wench fell in the garden desiring and having an apple. But one result of this jest is that the clown's criticism of the King's word becomes in turn suspect: the highly moral tone adopted by Costard simply draws attention to his over-simplicity (or as Q nicely puts it, 'sinplicitie'). The uncurbed flesh is as bad as the sterile word. One element in the education of the courtiers is learning how these can be reconciled.

The *débat* of spring and winter images more than the denouement. It reflects a play patterned throughout by debate between the lovers, arguing themselves towards a conclusion (like *Ver* and *Hiems,* the quartets of men and women are opposed, yet need each other). On the first appearance of the women, before they have heard from the men, they show themselves interested in the same issues:

> Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, though but mean,
> Needs not the painted flourish of your praise:
> Beauty is bought by judgement of the eye,
> Not utter'd by base sale of chapmen's tongues.
> (II. i. 13–16)

Like Navarre, the Princess is worrying at Sonnet themes, here echoing Shakespeare's troubled association between praising words and cosmetics (see, for instance, Sonnets 82 and 83). Such 'gross painting' conceals the natural beauty of woman; it is an art against nature of the kind joked about a little earlier in Moth's song, 'If she be made of white and red' (I. ii. 92–99). The Princess's lines thus lead the I. i. contention of word against flesh (she would, like Costard, resist Navarre's word) towards the question of flattering art versus nature. It is only the first of a series of objections to praise as 'gross painting': at II. i. 77 for example, 'God bless my ladies! are they all in love/That every one of her own hath garnished/With such bedecking ornaments of praise?', or IV. iii. 234, 'Lend me the flourish of all gentle tongues,—/Fie, painted rhetoric! O! she needs it not: /To things of sale a seller's praise belongs', or IV. i. 16, 'Nay, never paint me now: / Where fair is not, praise cannot mend the brow'.

Such passages reinforce the Princess's most important counter to the opening proposition of Navarre:

> Glory grows guilty of detested crimes,
> When, for fame's sake, for praise, an outward part,
> We bend to that the working of the heart;
> As I for praise alone now seek to spill
> The poor deer's blood, that my heart means no ill.
> (IV. i. 31–35)

For if it is a crime for the Princess to bend the working of her heart to 'hunt' after a pricket just for 'fame', it is also a crime for the King to suppress the working of his affections for 'fame, that all hunt after in their lives' (I. i. 1). The deer do her heart no harm, and Navarre's affections are quite as harmless. As the Princess identifies her 'fame' with that debased word 'praise', the King's aspirations are sullied, until they seem mere pride. Her word 'outward' gives his all-important 'fame' more than a hint of the sense 'hypocrisy'; a sense that seems uncomfortably appropriate as we recall that his 'fame' is to be the gloss of a self that is divided, at war with its own affections. As for the education planned in I. i, it becomes futile once its aspiration to fame is discredited by the Princess. In any case, Berowne had pointed out at the time that study is only a matter of vulgar 'fame': 'Too much to know is to know nought but fame; / And every godfather can give a name' (I. i. 92–93). So study too is an outward part—the folly of the crammed scholar is like that of a gilded monument, for both record the superficial. The theme of education shares 'fame' with that grander motif of man cheating cormorant Time: but 'fame' in either sense has been reduced to (using Armado's words) 'the varnish of a complete man' (I. ii. 40). The play will begin to educate its men towards a completeness less superficial than varnish.

Armado is the first of the court circle to submit to what the Princess calls 'the working of the heart', confessing as early as I. ii. 56 that he has lost the war against his 'affection'. Indeed, as soon as we see Armado we recognise his defeat, for he is striking the conventional postures of a lover: 'Boy, what sign is it when a man of great spirit grows melancholy?' (I. ii. 1). Moth elaborates the conventions for us:

> . . . with your hat penthouse-like o'er the shop of your eyes; with your arms crossed on your thin-belly doublet like a rabbit on a spit; or your hands in your pocket, like a man after the old painting; and keep not too long in one tune, but a snip and away. These are complements, these are humours, these betray nice wenches . . . and make them men of note (do you note, men?) that most are affected to these. (III. i. 14–23)

The ambiguity of that last phrase is important: the 'affected' (one affectionate) will by the same token be naturally 'affected' (make the conventional postures). This is not only applicable to Armado, or to Moth's cartoon-lover—it applies to the King:

> *Boyet.* . . . Navarre is infected.
> *Prin.* With what?
> *Boyet.* With that which we lovers entitle affected.
> (II. i. 229–31)

It applies, indeed, to all the courtiers, for they swear to war against their 'affections', but in Elizabethan English 'affection' could mean both the modern 'affection' and 'affectation' (hence *LLL* V. i. 4; and see OED *Affection* sb. V). Their oath is directed as much against affected behaviour as against affected feeling, and yet 'affection' in either direction is quite natural (it's only 'the working of the heart'). Armado postures freely just because he has capitulated to his 'affection' at I. ii. 56; but the courtiers enter Act II sworn to curb such self-expression, for to posture in affection is to be an oath breaker.

There is another reason, apart from the fear of oath breaking, for their fraught relationship with self-expression. Everyone in love cherishes a passion that he feels to be unique (it is, in a way) and it is disturbing to find that love must be expressed through conventions (to use the terms of *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* the lover expresses his unique passion like Jack or Jill). There is a discrepancy here (this sonnet falsifies my love—four times over) which explains one attraction of love to the writer of comedies. In Acts II–IV of *Love's Labour's Lost* the personal discrepancy projects into a larger movement, classically comic in form, of separation that turns back to social consolidation. Each lover believes his passion to be unique and estranging, but in the act of self-expression all sound like Jack and Jill: overhearing each others' self-expression, the sonnets and laments, proves to them that they were all the time together when they thought they were apart: 'four woodcocks in a dish!' (IV. iii. 79).

It is Berowne who shows most dramatically the struggle between a self and its natural expression (we'd expect this, as he is the courtier most conscious of the powers of his expression). Once in love with Rosaline he finds himself posturing like Armado before him;

> By heaven, I do love, and it hath taught me to rhyme, and to be melancholy; and here is part of my rhyme, and here my melancholy. Well, she hath one o' my sonnets already: the clown bore it, the fool sent it, and the lady hath it: sweet clown, sweeter fool, sweetest lady! (IV. iii. 11–16)

Armado uses this idiom for self aggrandizement ('I do affect the very ground, which is base, where her shoe, which is baser, guided by her foot, which is basest, doth tread' I. ii. 157–59), but Berowne uses it self-mockingly, so that the affected style works to prove his own charge that a 'fool' speaks it. Similarly with that Petrarchan idiom which Berowne had handled so skilfully (because he was then uncommitted to its 'affection') in the first scene:

> This wimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy,
> This signor junior, giant-dwarf, dan Cupid;
> Regent of love rhymes, lord of folded arms . . .
> (III. i. 174–76)

He mocks Petrarchan antitheses, and exaggerates the standard lover's sorry familiarity with the winged boy; but now that he loves he must use that convention to talk about his passion and find some relief for himself. As in the most dramatic of the Sonnets to the Dark Lady, patent contempt for affected Petrarchanism becomes difficult to disentangle from covert contempt for the mistress's beauty and the poet's affection for her. Sexual disgust lies just beneath literary parody, and it sometimes breaks through:

> And among three, to love the worst of all;
> A whitely wanton with a velvet brow,
> With two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes;
> Ay and by heaven, one that will do the deed
> Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard:
> (III. i. 190–94)

When Berowne leaves Petrarchanism for Euphuism at the start of IV. iii ('The king he is hunting the deer; I am coursing myself: they have pitched a toil; I am toiling in a pitch,—pitch that defiles: defile! a foul word'), the emotional entanglement (in the tangled prose) is again impossible to distinguish from contempt for that affection (the tangled prose is burlesque—as it was for Falstaff, see *lH4*, II. iv. 386-406). Only when the four woodcocks lie together in the dish does Berowne recover the fine lucidity of self-expression that had characterised him in the first scene, and he delivers the great rhapsody on Love. The first lines of that speech show us how the stylistic recovery has been won: 'Have at you then, affection's men at arms' (IV. iii. 286). The men have abandoned their oath, stopped the war against 'affections', and defected to the enemy. Hence the great surge of affectionate energy that marks the end of this part of the play, issuing in the intensity of Berowne's rhapsody and the capering and tumbling reported by Boyet (V. ii. 89–118); their martial energies are turned away from their own affections, and are directed at the women: 'Saint Cupid, then! and, soldiers, to the field! / Advance your standards, and upon them, lords!' (IV. iii. 362–63).

By the end of Act IV, therefore, the scholars have made progress in their proper 'education', abandoning the foolish war against their affections. But they still have much to learn. The Love they consent to is a doubtful one; abstracted, capitalized, the sort of compromise between the *Symposium* and *John* that we'd expect them to pick up through an academic reading of Ficino, Bembo, or Castiglione:

Ber. Subtle as Sphinx; as sweet and musical
As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair;
And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods
Make heaven drowsy with the harmony.
(IV. iii. 338–41)

This may be ravishing as poetry but it is hopelessly shoddy as metaphysics (note the singular-plural confusion of line 340, where Plato touches *John*). At any rate, such Love is too far from the girls of France. Berowne hymns the Love of Dumain's sonnet: 'Love, whose month is ever May' (IV. iii. 99), but the emotion is not yet tough enough for 'Christmas' as well as 'May', *Hiems* as well as *Ver*, the complete cycle of the seasons.

It is in Act V, in the masque, that the men are taught the inadequacy of their love. To love Love is Platonism with an odd corollary, leaving a scholar capable of loving any mistress: a comic point made when the women mask and swop favours, so that the masquerade Russians woo the wrong beloveds. The women's trick also rebukes the men for devotion to the 'outward part', for when Navarre courts 'the Princess' (in fact, Rosaline) he is actually courting the 'flourish' of his own favour—the masque hints that their emotion is rather close to self love. And if the men hoped that their masque wooing would be academically improving ('From women's eyes this doctrine I derive: /They sparkle still the right Promethean fire; /They are the books, the arts, the academes' IV. iii. 346–48), the women teach a rather different lesson. While the prologue of the masque is addressed to those 'eyes', it is confounded by the event ('A holy parcel of the fairest dames, /That ever turn'd their—backs—to mortal views!' V. ii. 160–61), for the women refuse to be treated as a heavenly parcel and turn their irrefutable backs (flesh to counter the word) against Berowne's carefully penned speech.

It is, of course, only the Princess's 'mock for mock' to treat the 'Russians' as a real embassy, and the men intend their disguise to be taken as part of a masque. This is made clear by the paraphenalia specified in the stage directions: *Enter Blackmores with musicke, the Boy with a speech, and the rest of the Lords disguised* (V. ii. 157. 1–2, Q and F). This raises formal expectations, for a masque will end in that general dance known as the 'revels' (as Boyet recognises: 'Their purpose is to parle, to court and dance' V. ii. 122). The ladies' refusal to dance is a shock, and more than a passing rebuff to the men. They rebuff the play. When they refuse to have their partners selected by the formal demands of the masque the women anticipate a refusal with larger consequences:

> *Ber.* Our wooing doth not end like an old play;
> Jack hath not Jill: these ladies' courtesy
> Might well have made our sport a comedy.
> (V. ii. 866–88)

In short, it is not the arrival of Marcade which destroys what looked like being a happy ending. The break-up of comic form begins much earlier: the disruption of the masque precipitates the disruption of the Pageant, and this, in turn, creates the imperfect cadence of the last scene.

There is a striking contrast with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* here. The Athenian lovers agree to recede into the anonymity of the old romance, Jack getting Jill, while the lovers in Navarre's garden do not; and, in each case, their attitude towards being Jack or Jill is illustrated by their attitude to an old play. The Interlude of Pyramus and Thisbe is taken in 'duty' but wins the 'imagination'. For although this old play is greeted by mockery, it ends with the stage audience granting it their own reality, so that Demetrius and Lysander move inside it to become 'presenters':

> *Lys.* She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.
> *Dem.* And thus she means, videlicet:—
> *This.* Asleep, my love?
> What, dead, my dove?
>
> (V. i. 313–16)

Athenian 'reality' and 'fiction' are seen to mingle. The moment has been anticipated, for if Theseus rejects 'antique fables' (V. i. 3) he is in Ovid anyhow. The moment prepares, too; for the Theseus who denied 'fairy toys' (V. i. 3) is prepared, after the mechanicals' play, to provide the Interlude with some sort of Epilogue, speaking of 'fairy time' (V. i. 353). The play's most fanciful creatures are granted reality, and they pour onto the stage. As Puck speaks an Epilogue for the larger fiction—steeping the whole play, lovers, mechanicals and fairies alike, in the uniform reality of dream—the marriages, Jack getting Jill, seem only part of a vast movement of integration. The ending is touched with pathos merely by its happiness; for as the play recedes from us, folding into its own fiction, we are happy for its achievement, yet sadly aware that we are being left outside it, in a difficult, real world. In *Love's Labour's Lost* this movement is reversed, for the stage audience is gradually estranged from fictions and plays, and in the end the characters walk out from their own comedy to join us in the real world. The Pageant of the Nine Worthies is begun in 'zeal' (Theseus's 'duty'), but shows no sign of winning 'imagination'. Instead there is a crescendo of abuse from

> *Cost.* I Pompey am,—
> *Ber.* You lie, you are not he.
> (V. ii. 541)

to the arrival of Marcade.

What causes this crescendo, and hence what drives the stage audience towards the theatre audience, is the progress of the courtiers' education. It was a standard defence of plays that they were educative, and not only because they showed improving sights that would otherwise not be seen (as '*Hercules* in his owne shape hunting the Boare, knocking downe the Bull' etc.), but because a good comedy would 'make men see and shame at their faults'.[5] The latter certainly applies to the men of *Love's Labour's Lost,* who see and are shamed by the faults of their masque wooing, imaged in the Pageant. When the Princess explains why the Pageant must cause mirth, Berowne ruefully applies her remarks to the masque: 'A right description of our sport, my lord' (V. ii. 517). The men, as 'guilty creatures, sitting at a play' (*Ham* II. ii. 585), design their abuse of the players to prove to themselves, and to the women, that they really have dismissed Russian habits, visors, and other maggot ostentations. But the more they abuse the players the more they abuse themselves for their own folly ('Though my mocks come home by me' says Dumain, aware that mocking Armado's faults he attacks his own; V. ii. 627), and their laughter turns cruel as they lash themselves into more and more defensive obloquy. Some of the extraordinary resonance of Holofernes's line 'This is not generous, not gentle, not humble' (V. ii. 623) springs from the paradox of its unfairness: the courtiers are indeed being cruel, yet in the profoundest sense being humbled.

The Pageant's fictions are systematically destroyed. Pompey is exposed as Costard, Alexander is only Nathaniel, Hercules Moth, and Judas Maccabaeus Holofernes. But with the entry of Hector the mockery cuts deeper—too deep, indeed, for the illusion of the larger play. Hector is exposed as Armado, but Moth offers to take Armado 'a button-hole lower', and the accepted identity of one of the play's characters—'the Braggart'—begins to seem only a role carefully cultivated by the Spaniard. For underneath the doublet, since Armado is shirtless, is something more essential; the flesh, the thing itself. Enter Marcade.

The Pageant falls apart at just this moment because, again, of the progress of the courtiers' education. Tell over the Worthies—Costard, Nathaniel, Moth, Holofernes, Armado—and it becomes clear that abuse crescendoes in proportion to the devotion of each player to the 'word' over the 'flesh'. Costard, as we saw, represents the erring flesh set against the word of the King's decree in I. i. It is true that he can be found engaged in a set of wit at IV. i. 102–50 (where, to our delight, he outskills Boyet), but in this play even Dull has a riddle to tell, and only Jaquenetta seems dumb enough to resist the lure of words entirely. Certainly, of the Pageant players Costard is the least word-prone, and he is accordingly let off lightly by the courtiers, eager to abuse those who make their own mistaken commitment to the word. But Nathaniel, the second Worthy, pursues Holofernes with his table book to hand, gathering singular and choice epithets. For the Curate and Pedant alike, words have appropriated the joys of the flesh, and they (significant verb) 'affect the letter' overmuch (IV. ii. 53). They seem to think that words, not wenches, do the breeding:

> *Nath.* Sir, he hath never fed of the dainties that are bred in a book.
>
> (IV. ii. 23)
>
> *Hol.* . . . these are begot in the ventricle of memory, nourished in the womb of *pia mater*, and delivered upon the mellowing of occasion.
>
> (IV. ii. 67)

The poem Holofernes is boasting of here is a perfect example of words breeding, for its p and s alliteration seems self spawning: 'The preyful princess pierc'd and prick'd a pretty pleasing pricket' (IV. ii. 55). The Pedant's verses show man studying words and not matter (to use

Bacon's phrase), letting the *verba* drift away from the *res*, thus betraying the Renaissance notion of a proper use of language. There is none of that power we feel in the season songs of *Ver* and *Hiems*, where (to use our own terms) words are packed with their referents. But if Holofernes is a word-prone character he is surpassed by the fourth Worthy. Musical, elusive, Moth is the epitome of the play's words, so that his name (punning on *le mot*) is perfectly appropriate. And like Lemot in Chapman's *An Humorous Day's Mirth* he exercises power in the comedy by verbal initiative.[6] He can outwit Holofernes by conversing with a, e, i, o, u—language almost totally divorced from referents. Moth shamelessly follows the logic of Berowne's attack on the oath: 'how easy it is to put years to the word three, and study three years in two words, the dancing horse will tell you' (I. ii. 48–50) —as we said, the King's 'oath' is only the King's 'word'.

As master of the page, Moth, Armado is master of the word; which seems apt enough. For the Spaniard, last of the Worthies, words are self-referential, like sounds in music: 'One whom the music of his own vain tongue / Doth ravish like enchanting harmony' (I. i. 165–66). And Shakespeare shifts Armado about the play, moving him to wherever there is wordiness (he had to be a foreigner, since no English-Navarrean could have such structural usefulness in this class-bound play). 'Inward' with the King, he is also on equal terms with the village schoolmaster: 'Arts-man, preambulate: we will be singled from the barbarous' (V. i. 73–74). Indeed, the play is gathered towards him by subtler, thematic links, too. As we saw, Navarre's decision to war against his affections is taken up in Armado's battle with desire: 'If drawing my sword against the humour of affection would deliver me from the reprobate thought of it . . .' (I. ii. 55–57). The soliloquy ending with the fearful words: 'Devise, wit; write, pen; for I am whole volumes in folio' (I. ii. 174–75) anticipates Berowne's remarks on his own composition (IV. iii. 11), much as the monstrous sonnet that Armado commits corresponds to the efforts of the courtiers in IV. iii. When Longaville seeks the 'authority' of Berowne's sophistry to excuse his love (IV. iii. 283), we remember how Armado asked Moth for the 'authority' of once great men to the same end (I. ii. 63). He is similarly linked with the low characters, so that Costard can classify him with Nathaniel and Holofernes as a verbal sensualist (an eater of fancies bred in a book): 'O, they have lived long on the alms-basket of words. I marvel thy master hath not eaten thee for a word' (the *le mot* pun lies behind this too; V. i. 37–38). In short, Armado's exposure at the height of the Pageant is an event with ramifications far beyond himself, for he bears on his shoulders much of the experience of those who look on.

So why a doublet but no shirt on those shoulders? Armado claims that he goes 'woolward for penance', an excuse which has a certain thematic interest (it anticipates the year of penance at the 'naked hermitage' in its 'naked truth'), but is hardly plausible in terms of character behaviour. Armado is a man of court, and the fact is that he has spent everything on the flourish of an 'outward part', his shirtlessness catching up that theme in the clarity of a stage symbol. He is a glass for the courtiers to behold themselves. But the doublet is most particularly a symbol for the 'outward' flourish of the 'word'. Language as the dress of thought was an Elizabethan commonplace, and it is, in any case, prepared for earlier in the scene: 'Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise, / Three-pil'd hyperboles, spruce affection, / Figures pedantical; . . . russet yeas and honest kersey noes' (V. ii. 406–08, 413). Armado has worn his spruce doublet of words to make a fine show and impress others, making the sensible flesh go woolward—the parallel with Navarre's fame-seeking, flesh-suppressing word is clear. And as Armado's flesh finally can't be suppressed and stirs for Jaquenetta, so the courtiers' word is broken for the girls of France.

When Armado has met and loved Jaquenetta the play's most word-prone character begins to woo its most taciturn and fleshly:

Arm. I do betray myself with blushing. Maid.
Jaq. Man.
Arm. I will visit thee at the lodge.
(I. ii. 124–26)

Armado's 'affection' stirs potent opposites within himself, moving him towards a new completeness. Flesh stirs under the words; love leads the arts-man to revoke his promise to study 'three years' with the King (I. ii. 34), replacing it by a resolve to 'hold the plough . . . three year' for a natural woman (V. ii. 875–76). Like the lords he will seek his completeness among the owls and cuckoos, in the world of the 'twelve celestial signs' (V. ii. 789).

But Jaquenetta's baby, the result of the fun at the lodge, has that ideal 'completeness' as its birthright. It represents the union of a word man and flesh woman, so that when it 'brags in the belly' it suggests vigorous talk as well as limb ('brag' can be taken either way). And its parentage implies that it 'brags' of language in a proper state, *res* in balance with *verba* (the child is not, like Nathaniel's language, merely 'bred in a book'). As the offspring of the arts-man and the natural woman it represents man adapted to (and not cloistered from) the real, difficult world. In *The Winter's Tale* a complete cycle of seasons is not deemed 'too long for a play' (*LLL* V. ii. 870), and the king's time of penance is brought within the action—a penance which ends on the appearance of a new child, and art meeting nature in a breathing statue. In *Love's Labour's Lost* there can be no such happy ending, for the penance is only just beginning. But that ending, like Jaquenetta's new child, is prepared: it will be there, under the owls and cuckoos, when a twelvemonth and a day, a circling of the seasons, has passed.

Merton College
Oxford

NOTES

[1] I quote from Ralph Berry's 'The Words of Mercury', *ShS*, 22 (1969), 69–77, an article which sets out to support the reading advocated by Bobbyan Roesen (Anne Barton), '*Love's Labour's Lost*' *SQ*, IV (1953), 411–26, A. C. Hamilton, *The Early Shakespeare* (San Marino, Ca., 1967), Marco Mincoff, 'Shakespeare and Lyly', *ShS*, 14 (1961), 15–24 and Philip Parsons, 'Shakespeare and the Mask',

ShS, 16 (1963), 121–31. Berry's list could easily extend to include such influential criticism as G. K. Hunter, *John Lyly* (London, 1962), p. 334, Northrop Frye, *A Natural Perspective* (New York, 1965), pp. 121–122, Philip Edwards, *Shakespeare and the Confines of Art* (London, 1968), p. 44.

A reply to this orthodoxy can be found in William C. Carroll's excellent *The Great Feast of Language in 'Love's Labour's Lost'* (Princeton, 1976). Carroll's observations occasionally coincide with my own, but he constructs a reading very different from (in some ways in opposition to) mine.

[2] See *Dr. Faustus,* ed. Jump, i. 8, 10, 18, 61–62.

[3] 'Word(s)' occurs more often in *LLL* than in any other of Shakespeare's plays (48 times, about twice the average). 'Word' is used with a range of meanings, from 'oath' or 'promise' (I. ii. 34–50, II. i. 159, V. ii. 449–51), to 'conversation' (II. I. 193–96, IV. i. 101, V. ii. 254), and the individual 'word' well cull'd (III. i. 138, V. i. 85 etc.).

[4] On this overlap see Cassirer's *The Platonic Renaissance in England* (tr. J. P. Pettegrove, 1953), his remarks on Ficino being of particular relevance to Berowne both here and in IV. iii (see my discussion, p. 278). Also generally helpful is Sears Jayne's 'Ficino and the Platonism of the English Renaissance', *Comp Lit,* 4 (1952). For a discussion of Platonism in *LLL* see Neal L. Goldstien, *'Love's Labour's Lost* and the Renaissance Vision of Love', *SQ,* 25 (1974), 335–50.

[5] Thomas Heywood, 'An Apology for Actors', in *The Seventeenth-Century Stage: A Collection of Critical Essays,* ed. G. E. Bentley (Chicago, 1968), pp. 12, 18.

[6] Moth was pronounced 'mote', as twice in IV. iii. 158: 'You find his moth; the king your moth did see; /But I a beam do find in each of three" (Q and F readings). 'Le mot' was pronounced with a sounded final 't'—as Palsgrave specifically tells his English readers in *Lesclarcissement,* and as Alfred Ewert notes in *The French Language,* 2nd ed. (London, 1943), p. 95.

Chapman puts it thus:

Martia. Madam, we shall not have one *mot* of Monsieur Lemot, but it shall be as it were a moat to drown all our conceit in admiration.

Lemot. See what a mote her quick eye can spy in mine, before she looks in it.
Martia. So mote I thee, thine answer is as good as mought be.
Lemot. Here's a poor name run out of breath quickly.
Count. Why, Monsieur Lemot, your name is run out of breath at every word you speak.
Lemot. That's because my name signifies word.
Martia. Well hit, Monsieur *Verbum*!
(v. 58–69)

An Humorous Day's Mirth may be indebted to *Love's Labour's Lost* for its ending; the action is resolved in a show provided by the low characters for the King and company, in which the maid—called Jaquina—is discovered to be pregnant.

Marvell's Warlike Studies

JAMES TURNER

MARVELL makes great use of military terms and conceits—'Groves of Pikes' in 'Upon the Hill and Grove at Billborrow', the fort-garden at Appleton house, the 'Pillaging' mowers, Maria withstanding siege and ambush, and the mock-heroics of the nunnery and *Last Instructions.* Such imagery presents a critical problem: it feels simultaneously apposite and absurd—tenor and vehicle seem incongruous despite their obvious connection—and yet Marvell applies it to such serious matters as the retirement of the lord-general and the default of the war ministry. Contemporary military writers increase our sense of the appositeness of this imagery. Its incongruity can be interpreted as a deliberate effect, a comment on the gulf between the requirements of the military world and the mentality depicted in the poem. In *Last Instructions* this comment is satirical: since the authorities have criminally neglected the upkeep of the armed forces the martial postures of their debates are particularly inappropriate. In *Upon Appleton House,* however, this incongruity is morally justified.

As well as this discrepancy between tenor and vehicle, the machinery of war itself evokes a mixed response—on one hand the ritual precision of drilling, the splendour of shining metal and rich uniforms, the arcane technology and the clear delineation of responsibilities and routines, on the other hand regimented brutality and slaughter. Samuel Jervis praises Richard Elton's *Compleat Body of the Art Military,* for example, because it removes the chaos and butchery from war; formerly

> it grieved the slain, that they must die
> Without a method, and disorderly,

But now

> we have attain'd the handsome skill,
> By order, method, and by rule to kill;
> From which we owe the beauties of our death.[1]

Jervis's tactless compliment shows how precariously these two aspects of army life are related, and how hideous it is to contemplate them simultaneously. The parallel of rural and military life was a well-established and comfortable literary conceit, however. Hunting is 'th'embleme of warre' in Carew's *From Wrest* (1639), which contrasts the paradisal delights of Bedfordshire with the real battlefields of the North, where Charles I was fighting the Scots. Prince Mirza in Denham's *The Sophy* (1642) hunts because it 'much resembles warre' and 'shewes us pretty dangers' (p. 11). Such imagery depends for its effect on the polarisation of the innocent and the violent, which allows us to contemplate their emblematic resemblances in safety. In Marvell this separation is less complete; his conceits, like military life itself, are both comforting and disturbing.

The principal occasion in Marvell's poems for martial imagery is the fort-garden at Appleton House. The combination of war and gardens would not necessarily have seemed incongruous. The Europe of the Thirty Years' War must have contained many gardens and walks erected, of necessity, on fortifications.[2] The inter relation of the military and the horticultural is reflected also in contemporary descriptions and designs: John Evelyn in Antwerp praises 'those delicious shades and walkes of stately Trees, which render the incomparably fortified Workes of the Towne one of the Sweetest places in Europ'[3]; Joseph Fürttembach tries to encompass luxuriously varied paradise gardens within the five points of a bastion[4]; Henry Hawkins endows his garden of the Virgin with alarming topiary soldiers.[5] There is a disturbing imbalance in many of these European examples, a painfully intrusive sense of real war, very different from the toy forts of Henry Fanshawe[6] and Lord Fairfax. The English paid for this insouciance, however; many of the sieges of the Civil War were fought within pathetically improvised earthworks, garden-forts indeed. In each of these cases there is an incongruity which stems from a disproportion between the power of war to disturb and the power of the practitioner—whether writer, gardenist or fortifier—to comprehend and quell it. This is not so with Marvell.

Upon Appleton House shows the military world controlled by understanding, reduced to an object-lesson. The seventeenth century laid great stress on education as an 'art of peace', but included warfare in the syllabus; military expertise was both an essential and prestigious part of a young man's *savoir faire* and an encouragement of violence, which sweeps away every goal that education strives for—*absit violentia rerum* was the motto of the century's greatest educator, Comenius. As tutor to the child of a retired warlord, Marvell was directly involved in this paradox, and his approach is—suitably enough—both complex and didactic. He recognises that postlapsarian knowledge of good is, in Milton's phrase, 'bought dear by knowing ill', that good and evil are inescapably linked, and so he cannot accept that polarisation of innocence and violence which allows the traditional pastoral to allude to war so cosily. Nor does he assume, like the tragedian, that innocence is necessarily obliterated by knowledge. The Appleton estate is celebrated as a world

> Where not one object can come nigh
> But pure, and spotless as the Eye,
>
> (st. 91)

but this state of paradoxical innocence is achieved not by magic or escapism but by '*Discipline* severe', by moral education and strenuous self-examination. The ancestral programme of house- and garden-building is therefore an educational process; old Lord Fairfax

> when retired here to Peace,
> His warlike Studies could not cease;
> But laid these Gardens out in sport
> In the just Figure of a Fort.
>
> (st. 36)

These lines echo the 'Horatian Ode'—

> So restless *Cromwel* could not cease
> In the inglorious Arts of Peace—

but, as happens several times in Marvell,[7] verbal similarity only increases our sense of actual difference. The poetic effect in both these cases depends on the contradiction of comfort and disquiet: with Cromwell peace is overthrown and only glory and steadfastness regale us; with Fairfax peace is established, though not without a residue of violence. Cromwell and old Lord Fairfax were led by the same momentum to diametrically opposite acts—one to a declaration of war which established a political order in which peacetime itself must be martial, the other to a retirement in which the very apparatus of war is pacific, 'laid out in sport' at the service of the gentler art of education.

The conjunction of 'sport' and 'study' gives *Upon Appleton House* its distinctive effect. Seventeenth-century educators agreed with their modern successors in their insistence on structured learning through pleasurable discovery. Marvell himself equated the poet's task with the educator's: the purpose of *Last Instructions*, like that of the Skimmington Ride it describes, it to 'teach Youth by Spectacle Innocent' (l. 389). In his account of the Appleton House fort-garden he provides us with both an interpretation of its original purpose and a set of criteria by which to judge its success. It must be both warlike and sportive, a *just* figure of a fort (able to pass with the country's leading militarist) but also an innocent spectacle, disarmed of its sting. The actual garden, according to Marvell, originated as an embodiment of Lord Fairfax's 'Studies', part of a process which includes reading, didactic discourse and its corresponding exercises; these must be precisely structured and assiduously performed, yielding moral profit—unlike the 'useless Study' of the fashionable world attacked in stanza 92. Marvell's fort-garden is itself an extended study, working it up into a series of exercises to reinforce its moral lesson. It may be compared to Prynne's *Mount-Orgeuil* (1641), in which the fortified garden of Jersey castle is made to yield profit to the mind as it is described, since it witnesses divine providence. A closer parallel may be found in an emblem of Saavedra's,[8] which shows not the awkward coexistence of gardens and forts but a five-pointed garden 'laid out in the just Figure of a Fort'—the *representation* of fortification in green and innocent materials. The purpose of this emblem is wholly didactic; the prince, at the age of fourteen (Mary Fairfax's age in 1652), should learn the hard disciplines of language and war in pleasant games and exercises. Saavedra begins with the recognition that 'learning has bitter roots, even though its fruits are sweet'; his programme of education is a formal means of turning bitter into sweet. *Upon Appleton House* resembles this emblem in its emotional strategy as well as its more obvious formal features. It uses military imagery, justly conceived and diligently applied, to recommend a process of education through joy. It makes a spectacle of the bitterness and violence of war itself in order to teach the Fairfaxes how to adapt to peace, how to rejoice in the painful severance of Mary—the 'bud' who will be cut from the family tree by marriage—and the collapse of their hopes for a line of warrior-heroes (st. 93).

These insights are not facile, but hard-won. Readers of the poem—that includes the Fairfaxes as well as ourselves—are taken through several areas of uncertainty. Is the prevailing tone serious or frivolous, melancholy or heart-warming? An ambivalent, mingled response could well be a practical result of Marvell's theory of education for innocence through knowledge. The process is made explicit in his *First Anniversary*. Among the glories of Cromwell's first year of government is one unhappy accident, and Marvell gives an object-lesson in how we must assimilate this:

> Let this one Sorrow interweave among
> The other Glories of our yearly Song.
> Like skilful Looms which through the costly thred
> Of purling Ore, a shining wave do shed:
> So shall the Tears we on past Grief employ,
> Still as they trickle, glitter in our Joy
> (11. 181–6)

The wise observer copes with violence and misery not by averting his gaze but by relating it to a larger scheme; the artist likewise, far from obliterating the element of pain, displays them in proportion to add richness and poignancy to his emotional texture. The uncertainties of tone in *Upon Appleton House* operate in a similar way: they provide a means of dealing with those disturbing elements that the innocent would be unwise to ignore. Unhappy memories of war and bereavement should be woven into the tapestry of peace; the light and witty manner should itself convey learning about serious things.

The Fairfax military garden has been compared to Toby Shandy's—both men, led by their ruling passion, construct an incongruously gentle version of the machinery of war, our response to which is divided between the serious and the comical—but the parallel should not be pressed too far. Uncle Toby's innocence is revealed in the sheer absence of evil thoughts from his mind, but the world of Appleton House requires expertise to unmask villainy. William Fairfax shows that he understands the clandestine evil of the nunnery before he breaches its physical wall; the physical attack is done in burlesque, while the deliberations beforehand have depth and intensity:

I know what Fruit their Gardens yield,
When they it think by Night conceal'd.
(st. 28)

Deep knowledge, the ability to enter closed and specialised worlds and move there with the freedom of an expert, has thus a moral dimension. Marvell himself displays such knowledge in his military imagery, and so actively participates in its moral and didactic scheme.

Contemporary soldiers' handbooks help us to appreciate Marvell's expertise. Stanza 40, for example, shows how much he is at home in military routine:

But when the vigilant *Patroul*
Of Stars walks round about the *Pole,*
Their Leaves, that to the stalks are curl'd,
Seem to their Staves the *Ensigns* furl'd.
Then in some Flow'rs beloved Hut
Each Bee as Sentinel is shut;
And sleeps so too: but if once stir'd,
She runs you through, or askes *the Word*.

The comparison of the night watch to stars is doubly appropriate. 'Walking of the great *Round*' was a responsible task, done by *'Rounders, or Gentlemen'* of a higher order than 'the Bundle of Common Souldiers'; a patrol or *'Patroville'* was a special detachment of the guard equipped with firearms—until special shields were invented, the glowing points of their matches made them visible in the dark.[9] The bee-sentinel fails in her duties on four counts: she should not be in the huts at all, let alone fall asleep, and both her possible responses to disturbance are wrong. The sentinel had to challenge the intruder to stand, place a weapon against his breast and call the corporal, who alone was allowed to ask and receive the secret password.[10]

These manuals insist, above all, on the formal perfection of manoeuvres—that 'order, method and rule' to which, according to Jervis, 'we owe the beauties of our death'. They are mostly taken up with elaborate geometrically-patterned sequences of countermarching, wheeling, doubling and firing, as practised in 'those great *Nurseries* of *Military Discipline,* the famous *Academies* of this our *Island,* the *Artillery* and *Military Gardens'.*[11] These were the two main amateur soldiers' clubs of London; the phrases *Military Garden* and *Artillery Garden,* however, applied equally to the places where they practised. Their complex and precise rituals were open to objections from hardened soldiers: 'fit they are, we confesse, in the *Military Gardens,* but in time of Battail both troublesome and cumbersome'.[12] Their relatively innocent and ceremonial nature is apparent. Instead of real shooting they used 'false *firings,* which is, firing in the *pan* only . . . that in time of need they may not spend their *powder,* and *bullets,* in vain'[13]; Marvell similarly congratulates the flowers on their noiseless vollies, which strike only the sight and smell. Their manoeuvres included purely ceremonial exercises, like making 'a *Street* or *Gallery*' of troops for a senior officer to pass through[14] (stanza 78 is set 'Where the two Woods have made a Lane') or like the four-pointed 'Fort-battell', which 'taketh its *denomination* rather from the *similitude,* then the strength of a Fort'. Precisely the same could be said of the Fairfax garden and of the poem which describes it; we are are entertained by the exactness of the similitude and the cleverness of making it out of such recalcitrant material as men (or flowers), and we are reassured by its lack of solidity. It is not the real thing. The 'chief use' of this figure 'is for the *entertainment* of some great *personage* or *Commander* in the *field*: who being received into the *midst* of the divisions of *Pikes*; the *Muskettiers* may *present* and *give fire,* altogether in one *vollie*'.[15] Marvell's metaphorics were not as outlandish as they now seem. The militarists themselves had their conceits—their 'just Figure of a Fort', their 'equal Fires' and ceremonial 'Vollyes' (st. 38–9). They embroider also on the paradox of a *military garden*:

> Go on my *Friend,* and let there spring from *our*
> *Artillery Garden* many such a *Flower* . . .
> This *Gard'ner* thats adorned with more *Flowres*
> Of *Discipline,* than is the Yeare with *houres.*[16]

Marvell's '*flowres of Discipline*' are a subtler version of the same conceit. The initial garden-sequence (st. 36–40) shows the military world in its most pleasant aspect, 'in sport', bustling, decorative and painless. Tenor and vehicle are not at odds.

At stanza 41 there is a dramatic turning-point, when Marvell laments the fall of England. The similitude ceases to be entertaining, as it hauls up memories of real civil war:

> Oh Thou, that dear and happy Isle
> The Garden of the World ere while . . .
> What luckless Apple did we tast,
> To make us Mortal, and Thee Wast?

This shock-effect is itself a covert military metaphor. It resembles in several ways the moment in Mildmay Fane's *Candy Restored* when the panels of the stage-set, decorated with military emblems, 'without a miletary word turne silently faces about at the chang in States fortune and ar backt with nothing but Fresh greenes and faire garden Landskips'.[17] Marvell's stanza refers to, and reproduces in dramatic form, a 'change in State's fortune'; it deals with local and national politics simultaneously, by means of an alternation of 'garden Landskips' and military imagery; it pivots on the idea of the 'military word faces about'. '*Word*', which could mean both 'password' and 'word of command', is the signal for the tone and imagery of Marvell's poem to perform the drill-manoeuvre *metabole* or *faces about.*[18] Tenor and vehicle change place; the other side of war threatens to overwhelm the peace-time garrison garden:

> Unhappy! shall we never more
> That sweet *Militia* restore,
> When Gardens only had their Towrs,
> And all the Garrisons were Flowrs . . .
> The *Gardiner* had the *Souldiers* place,
> And his more gentle Forts did trace.
> (sts. 42–3)

This is the exact opposite of an incident of 1622, when Master Gunner Hammond converted part of the Artillery Garden into 'cabbage gardens'— he was eventually forced to root them up.[19] In both cases the ironic incompatibility of 'Gun-garden'[20] and real garden becomes uncomfortably vivid.

The double-turn of imagery was often thought suitable to celebrate rural innocence and the end of war. Henry Wotton, for example, invites us to imagine a world where military gear exists *only* as a metaphor for peace:

> Nor warres are seen,
> Unless upon the greene
> Two harmelesse Lambs are butting one the other;
> Which done, both bleating run, each to his Mother.
> And wounds are never found,
> Save what the *Plow-share* gives the ground.[21]

As I suggested earlier, this topos is 'comfortable' both because it is traditional and because it assumes that innocence and violence are unproblematically distinct. Marvell is more subversive. In the very heart of the celebration of Fairfax's peace he inserts a voice which complains of a continuing state of war, and he uses the logic of his metaphor to put it there. But in the world of Appleton House tragic visions are generated by play; the metaphor performs a triple turn. He insists that the innocent world is vanished and its metaphors untenable, but he does so in organic and horticultural terms—

> But War all this doth overgrow:
> We Ord'nance Plant and Powder sow.
> (st. 43)

Then in the meadow-sequence (stanzas 47–60) the entire turning manoeuvre is repeated, restoring the primacy of the innocent. Once again, rural business is the tenor and the machinery of battle a witty vehicle—itself softened and scaled-down by pastoral and domestic terms, '*Thestylis*' (st. 51), 'quilted' or 'new Traverse' (st. 53)—a traverse was an embroidered curtain.

The whole passage resembles a Military Garden exercise in several respects; it is performed with the combination of earnest involvement and amused detachment that one would expect from a gentleman-amateur-soldier, it is pleasurable, circumscribed and formally exact. Other poets of the period imitate military array in their verse: Benlowes's commendatory poem on Robert Ward's *Animadversions of Warre* (1639), for example, is divided into eleven sections and entitled 'Exercitus Sacer, in Xi Legiones et Lectiones ordinatus' (f. *6). Here the external form of the poetic exercise corresponds directly to the units of an army in battle formation. Marvell does not choose this iconic mode of representation; his turns and manoeuvres are located in the logical reversals of tenor and vehicle and in the sudden changes of tone from sweet to bitter, from brilliant lightness to disturbed melancholy. The reader is a participant in this exercise rather than a spectator; it takes place on inner grounds.

Stanzas 36–56 do nevertheless show marks of the drill-yard in their external form—a subtle parallelism of diction and content that reinforces our sense of controlled manoeuvre. 36 concludes the previous story and introduces the garden; 46 concludes the garden and introduces the meadow. 37–40 shows the happy routine of the garden, ending however in the stab of the bee; 47–50 show the happy routine of the meadow, ending in another painful little accident, the death of the bird. This marks a 'turn' in each case. 41–5 and 51–5 are the painful 'applications' of these accidents, each beginning in a sombre tone, and each marking a new phase in the permutation of military-rural imagery. (It may also be noteworthy that 42 and 52 both begin 'Unhappy' while 43 and 53 are formalised catalogues of military effects, each detail explicitly matched to a rural one.) 56 brings on new scenes, and thereafter the dominant imagery is theatrical rather than military, and formal parallelism can no longer be traced. This patterning is not obtrusive—it is typical of Marvell to make it tenuous and impressionistic—but it does add a spruce and marshalled quality to his description; the 'pleasant footsteps' promised in stanza 11 are here given marching orders. The same tightness is given to the end of the poem, when poet and estate both stand to attention:

> See how loose Nature, in respect
> To her, it self doth recollect;
> And every thing so whisht and fine,
> Starts forth with to its *Bonne Mine.*
> (st. 83)

'Bonne mine' was an explicitly military term.

Such, then, is the 'Spectacle Innocent' of *Upon Appleton House,* a ceremonial march-past for the family and a demonstration of how to convert bitter into sweet. Innocence for Marvell is not the mere absence of evil thoughts and associations, but something positive, strenuous and knowing—a 'radical innocence' achieved by squaring up to the whole of experience, becoming a critical expert in violence the more firmly to expunge it. Appleton House is like Eden not simply in its topography, but because knowledge of good, normally 'bought dear by knowing ill', is here sold on favourable terms. This is the object of his 'warlike Studies'. Marvell shows a thorough acquaintance with the horrible as well as the good of martial life; he harnesses them, as it were, to drive the poem. Military imagery evokes clashing associations, but in *Upon Appleton House* they work dialectically, producing new reality. Metaphor generates a more literal truth. The horror of war at first undermines its spruceness, but the balance is triumphantly restored. Marvell 'makes the Meadow truly be' (st. 59) what the civil war destroyed; it is a stage in the reconstruction of a confident and productive world. The standard suggestion that the meadow represents the civil war in England is surely indiscriminate; this episode dismantles the memory of war evoked by the garden and promotes a more constructive way of interpreting the world. The mowers 'massacre' the grass, but only in the interest of the harvest. The accident in the meadow, when a young bird is killed, proves beneficial; the rail provides a scrap of protein for the men, and a chance for the poet to indulge in a traditional delight of topographical poetry, the tragic death of an edible creature. Civilian values prevail over military. Heroic gestures, likewise, are not valued for their own sake, but only as they advance the cause of piety and domestic happiness. The 'successive Valour' of Fairfax's ancestors leads to the bathos of 'half-dry Trenches' (st. 31 and 44); we are forced to redefine *success* on a higher moral level. In Propertius IV.ix Hercules batters down the gates of a nunnery; the episode is not respected in itself, but it led to the foundation of the Ara Maxima or Great Altar of Rome. William Fairfax's grotesque battle with the nuns is likewise an affair of 'small Honour' (st. 30); yet it reunited the lovers 'at the *Altar*' (st. 33) and so founded the pious Appleton dynasty. Such is the moral of the poem. Now the gentler virtues of Mary, the sole heir of that dynasty, must supersede the Fairfax military tradition.

It is clear that Marvell is in careful control of his military imagery. His eye is continually on the logic of his metaphor; he uses the shifting and sometimes problematic relationship between tenor and vehicle as an object-lesson in how to relate to the fallen world. Sometimes he uses effects which seem incongruous to the layman, but which to the expert are sweetly appropriate. Through his use of the ceremonial exercises and routines of the garrison and the military garden, he establishes a deferential intimacy with Fairfax, speaking his language. This seems at first to encourage his patron's nostalgia for the arts of war. But having established this community of interest Marvell proceeds to undermine it—subtly, never quite breaking decorum, he burlesques the heroic poses, unmasks the violence and reasserts the ultimate inappropriateness of the warrior-mentality itself. His expert handling of military practice proves him qualified to teach the more difficult art of adaptation to peace and retirement. Marvell could not of course present himself to Lord Fairfax as an authority in the way that he could to Mary; he chooses instead to show his mastery as a poet, an *auctor*. He recommends rather than orders. To read *Upon Appleton House* is to act out a programme of voluntary and pleasant study. It encouraged the Fairfaxes to see life at Appleton as a beginning and not an end, to use these warlike studies to defeat the legacy of war.

University of Liverpool

NOTES

[1] (1650), f.†4.

[2] cf. the fort-shaped courtyard at Caprarola, mentioned in Evelyn's *Diary,* ed. E. S. de Beer (1955), ii.406; it still exists.

[3] Evelyn, *op.cit.,* ii.67. He visits fortifications as readily as he does gardens, but responds to quite different properties in each—sublime strength in one, beauty and variety of invention in the other.

[4] in e.g. *Architectura Civilis* (Ulm, 1628), illustrated (without reference) in D. Clifford, *A History of Garden Design* (1962).

[5] *Parthenia Sacra* (Rouen, 1633), p. 8.

[6] John Chamberlain, *Letters,* ed. N. E. McClure (Philadelphia, 1939), i.235.

[7] e.g. 'sliding foot' in 'The Garden' and *Upon Appleton House* st. 81, or 'fence' in 'A Dialogue, between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure', and *UAH* st. 36.

[8] Diego Saavedra de Fajardo, *Idea de un Principe Politico Christiano, Representada in Cien Empresas,* 2nd ed. (Milan, 1642), p. 32. This emblem does not appear in the first edition of 1640.

[9] cf. Francis Markham, *Five Decades of Epistles of Warre* (1622), pp. 45 and 49–50; Robert Ward, *Animadversions of Warre* (1639), pp. 393–4; Richard Elton, *Compleat Body of the Art Military* (1650), pp. 179 and 187–8—this book was dedicated to Fairfax.

[10] Markham, op.cit., pp. 45–8; Elton, op.cit., pp. 176, 179–180 and 188. Markham stresses the importance of not entrusting sentinels with the word, and illustrates it with an incident from the Dutch wars which Fairfax must have known (p. 48).

[11] Elton, op.cit., p. 32. The old Artillery Garden was in

Spitalfields, and the new one, open concurrently from 1640, in Bunhill Fields; the Military Garden was in St. Martin's Fields. Cf. C. H. Firth, *Cromwell's Army,* 4th ed. (1962), p. 11.

[12] Elton, op.cit., p. 54.

[13] ibid., p. 51; cf. William Barriff, *Military Discipline* (1635), f.v.

[14] Thomas Kellie, *Pallas Armata* (Edinburgh, 1627), p. 64; Elton, *Compleat Body* (1650), p. 33. On p. 84 Elton gives an exercise to convert a rectangular troop into a perfect circle—echoed perhaps in *U.A.H.* st.7 'the *Square* grows *Spherical*'.

[15] Barriff, op.cit., p. 266. This *feu de joie* was a recent invention in Marvell's time—see J. W. Fortesque, *A History of the British Army,* 2nd ed., i (1910), 171.

[16] From poems by colleagues in William Barriff, *Military Discipline* 2nd ed. (1639), ff.a2-v. Barriff himself calls his friends 'the *choisest flowers* of our *Artillery Garden*' (f.¶lx) and Elton compares good exercises to well-chosen bouquets (*Compleat Body,* p. 21).

[17] *Raguaillo d'Oceano 1640 and Candy Restored 1641,* ed. C. Leech (Louvain, 1938), p. 101.

[18] cf. John Bingham, *The Tacktics of Aelian . . . Englished* (1616), p. 117; Kellie, *Pallas Armata,* p. 32; Gervase Markham, *The Souldiers Grammar*, 2nd ed. (1639), i.4; Elton, *Compleat Body,* f.§4 (where 'faces about' is used punningly) and *passim.* Μεταβολη is also a rhetorical term for repetitive variation.

[19] To the delight of one Artillery-Garden colleague, who boasted that 'Trees we cut down, and Gardens added to it' i.e. the Garden (*Survey of London,* xxvii (1957), 26).

[20] Evelyn, *Diary,* ed. E. S. de Beer (1955), ii.66; he refers to a military practice area in Antwerp. The word is not in the *O.E.D.*

[21] Henry Wotton, *Reliquiae* (1651), p. 232; cf. Robert Baron, Ἐροτοπαιγνιον (1647), ii.69–70 which also parades military vocabulary in order to disavow it—now that peace has returned to the countryside there will be no 'ranks' but in games and dances, no 'pike' but in the river, and so on at length.

Work Suspended: Waugh's Climacteric

MARTIN STANNARD

WORK SUSPENDED is the most enigmatic of Waugh's writings. Its mockery of socialism and philistinism is of course quite in keeping with his rôle as the right-wing Catholic apologist defending 'civilization' from the 'barbarians', but the emotional intensity of the work, expressed in a more conventional and committed prose style than that of the five early novels is surprising. Although unfinished, *Work Suspended* has an evasive cohesion, perhaps because the characterization appears to be based on values and assumptions which derive from a private world beyond the text. It has the appearance of a longer novel from which many of the fictional linking devices have been cut and, to a certain extent, this was indeed the case.

The central figure, John Plant, is a fastidious and urbane thriller writer. He returns from Fez to England after his father is killed in a road accident by a travelling salesman called Atwater. The father, an artist, is luridly described as fulfilling the 'broken promise' of nineteenth-century subject painting. Plant himself discovers that he is undergoing a 'climacteric' and cannot write. He becomes emotionally involved with Lucy, the pregnant wife of Roger Simmonds, an old socialist friend. Plant decides to abandon his nomadic existence and settles in the country. Towards the end of the work, Humboldt's Gibbon (in the London Zoo) appears to have of some symbolic relevance to this analysis of artistic and domestic transformation. The story concludes with the birth of Lucy's baby. Waugh, however, explains very little; the characters do not develop but are fully formed when we first encounter them. Lucy is convincingly portrayed yet, ultimately, we must admit that we know almost nothing about her. Even when allowance is made for the narrating persona, Waugh appears to be laying his literary soul open in an entirely new fashion. It is true that the death of the old and the birth of a new, 'dark' age had been his subject since 1930 (*Vile Bodies* concludes with a scene set on 'the biggest battlefield in the history of the world') but this strange, incomplete tale alters his whole approach. What, then, is the significance of these disparate figures? And why, when it is of such high quality, did he find himself unable to complete their history?

Work Suspended was first published in a hardback limited edition of five hundred copies by Chapman and Hall in 1942. The 'Postscript' in the Penguin edition states that: 'The date of the child's birth was 25 August, 1939, and while Lucy was still in bed, the air-raid sirens sounded the first false alarm of the Second World War. And so an epoch, my epoch, came to an end. Intellectually we had foreseen the event, and had calmly discussed it, but our inherited habits continued to the last moment' (p. 193). *Work Suspended,* then, seems simply a reaction to the war as a cultural watershed beyond which 'all our lives, as we had constructed them, quietly came to an end' (p. 194). The battlefield of *Vile Bodies* had been a theoretical concept; the sirens of World War II represented an assault on civilization which necessitated a practical response from Waugh. In 1942 he was an enlisted soldier. It is therefore unremarkable, we might say, that he should have altered his lighter pre-war style to meet this challenge.

Such an explanation is only part of the story. The Postscript does not appear in either the Ms (1939) or the 1942 hardback edition. This first edition, much more of a personal document, is in many respects radically different from the current text and the complex history of the work's gestation and publication needs explaining before we can suggest reasons for its composition. We need, in fact, to go back even further, to the development of his relationship with Laura Herbert.

The period 1929–1935 had proved a particularly difficult time for Waugh. After his first wife's desertion (mid '29) he had embarked on a series of winter visits to remote peoples and, even in England, travelled constantly between his friends' houses. *When The Going Was Good* (1946) reveals that: 'From 1928 until 1937 I had no fixed home and no possessions which would not conveniently go on a porter's barrow'. He neglects to mention the 'fixed home' in Canonbury Square that he shared as an optimistic young husband in 1929. But his reception into the Church in September 1930 effectively destroyed all serious hope of securing what he most coveted—a safe Catholic marriage —and he found himself in the uncomfortable situation of having, technically, to commit mortal sin with a series of prostitutes. His acute sense of propriety and innate romantic desire for total commitment were perpetually outraged. 'I used to sleep with people who looked like badgers', he once wistfully remarked to Christopher Sykes. The *Diaries* from 1930 onwards become brusque and impersonal, reflecting the mind of a man who expects little but pain from the world and is rather proud of his scepticism. He even suffered slanderous attacks from the official organ of his adopted religion. Earnest Oldmeadow, editor of the *Tablet,* described *Black Mischief* (1932) as 'a disgrace to anyone professing the Catholic name"[1] and continued his campaign against Waugh until he was replaced some years later by Douglas Woodruff. In a vituperative, unpublished defence of the initial criticism Waugh noted that: 'The path of the convert in England is not without its embarrassments'.[2]

His one fixed point of reference was his parents' house, first at Hampstead and, later, Highgate. Arthur Waugh was a benevolent, old-fashioned man-of-letters, industrious, conventional, efficient, not at all the intransigent old bear of an aesthete depicted in John Plant's father. But the emotional estrangement, that awkward distance between father and son, was drawn from personal experience. Waugh's early reckless life at Oxford and his adoption by the rich and decadent element was an arrogant rejection of his father's cosy world of Georgian *littérateurs*. The reverance he had felt at school for Arthur Waugh's 'position' in the world of letters eventually degenerated into an unemotional loyalty. He would arrive at Hampstead or Highgate, like Plant, aware of parental concern at his curious life but, unable and unwilling to confide, leave again quickly with a change of clothes and books.

A profound sense of spiritual exile, then, characterises Waugh's life during the early thirties. He poured his energy into travelling and (with great difficulty) into the conscious artistry of his novels. He disliked writing. It was hard work and he was unfortunately both fastidious and lazy, by nature a dilettante. His journalism, however, reveals a serious approach to aesthetics. He considered himself a technician, a cabinet-maker of fiction. He had no time either for the passionate, inchoate effusions of Lawrence or the 'conversation and biology' (*Diaries*, p. 297) of Huxley. Both, he believed, suffered from lack of selection. Clarity, concision, the use of the 'refrain' rather than statement, a sense of fantasy and of the self-supporting reality of a work of art beyond and above the 'issues' involved—these were the tenets of his aesthetic faith. The artist, in his view, should clarify and make exact those nebulous ideas thrown up by experience. His trade, like the priest's, was concerned with elucidation and communication, the formulation of order from chaos. Defending *Black Mischief,* he reserved the right of a Catholic author not to write 'actively propagandist'[3] work.

In 1935, however, several things occurred which caused him to shift dramatically towards active propaganda. His biography of the Jesuit Martyr, *Edmund Campion,* was published and warmly received by Catholics as a work of popular apologetics; he visited Abyssinia for the pro-Mussolini *Daily Mail*; and he met Laura Herbert, then only nineteen, a debutante student at R.A.D.A.—quiet, intelligent, rather stubborn and unimaginative, but with a deceptively powerful character and a strong sense of social position. The success of *Campion* and his relationship with Laura rekindled something of the latent romantic in him. In 1936 he returned to Abyssinia at the expense of the Italian conquerors to witness this latest extension of the Roman Empire and his letters to his fiancée pulse with a new enthusiasm. With his long-guarded emotional defences so completely breached, even the future seemed uncertain:

> You see, darling child, so often when people fall in love and want to be married it is because they foresee a particular kind of life to which the other is necessary. Sometimes I think it would be lovely to lead the sort of life with you that I have led for the last ten years—no possessions, no home, sometimes extravagant and luxurious, sometimes lying low and working hard. At other

> times I picture a settled patriarchal life with a large household, rather ceremonious and rather frugal, and sometimes a minute house, a few friends, and a little work and leisure and love.[4]

It is quite wrong to suppose that, once married, Waugh was at last able to fulfil a long-frustrated ambition of aping the aristocracy. He wrote several times from Abyssinia asking friends to find him a cottage. If anything, it would appear from the letters that the pressure towards establishing a 'position' in the rural community came more from Laura's sensitivity to social distinction. She wanted a smallholding and threw herself energetically into farming. Waugh had no interest in the 'squirearchic' life of cattle shows and magistrates' benches. He lived in the country because he wanted to be alone and because, as his journalism reveals, he thought London, despoiled by 'planners' and functional architecture, 'had ceased to be habitable'.[5]

For a variety of reasons, then, Waugh's life, by the time he re-married in April 1937, had irrevocably altered and he adopted increasingly conservative views to protect his new position. Certain aspects of Italian Fascism are supported in *Waugh In Abyssinia* (1936). 'Masculinity' becomes an adjective of aesthetic commendation in his reviews. His own feelings of increased virility and sensitivity found expression both in right-wing eulogy and in the preparation of his next novel, *Scoop* (1938).

The final revision of this novel was complex and as late as 10 January, 1938 Waugh noted: 'Work on *Scoop* going slowly with infinite interruptions and distractions'. The new regime of peaceful seclusion that he had planned for himself was constantly baulked by minor household problems. During the latter part of 1937 his diary entries record clear signs of mental confusion: 'I have been surprised again and again lately by blanks and blurs in my memory, being reminded by Laura of quite recent events which delighted me and which I have now completely forgotten. I have therefore decided to try once more to keep a daily journal' (*Diaries,* 12 Nov., 1937, p. 424). Even in the daily entries which, for a brief period, follow this it becomes clear that Waugh's thinking is muddled. He repeats, as new, information recorded only a few days earlier. On 12 November he travelled to London to speak on 'ideological writing' at the Sunday Times Book Fair: 'Having an empty mind I drank two huge whiskies to stimulate it: paralysed it instead . . . heard my voice like someone else's droning and stumbling; felt, 'if only I could sit back and think of other things'; and realised that I must keep this thing in motion. At last, in an awful blank, I looked at my watch; I found it was 5 o'clock so shut up sharp . . . To bed early with headache' (*Diaries,* p. 425). On 19 November he inexplicably hit himself in the face causing a 'nasty cut'. He was just thirty-four at the time—the age given to John Plant in *Work Suspended.*

After finishing *Scoop* Waugh then set out to report on the socialist regime in Mexico and, in particular, the persecution of Catholics. Graham Greene had just returned and the contrast later noted between the two journeys is significant: 'Mr. Greene's was an heroic journey, mine was definitely homely'.[6] Waugh had made his first excursion abroad with Laura his reckless adventurous days were over. *Robbery Under Law* (1939), the resulting book, contains an extensive defence of the 'Conservative' approach. Looking back in 1946 he remarked:

> When I gadded among savages and people of fashion and politicians and crazy generals it was because I enjoyed them. I have settled down now because I ceased to enjoy them and because I have found a much more abiding interest—the English Language . . . I have never, until quite lately, enjoyed writing . . . I wanted to be a man of the world and took to writing as I might have taken to archaeology or diplomacy as a means of coming to terms with the world. Now I see it as an end in itself. Most European writers suffer a climacteric at the age of 40. Youthful volubility carries them so far. After that they either become prophets or hacks or aesthetes . . . I am no prophet and, I hope, no hack . . . The failure of modern novelists since and including James Joyce is one of presumption and exorbitance. They are not content with the artificial figures which hitherto

passed so gracefully as men and women. They try to represent the whole human mind and soul and yet omit its determining character—that of being God's creature with a defined purpose.[7]

Waugh's artistic dilemma was complex and in 1939 he could not fully understand it himself. The overwhelming frustration was the difficulty of formulating a positive position as a novelist. His earlier writings, working within a humanist framework described behaviour and asserted Catholic values by negative suggestion. But they seemed 'light' because they omitted 'the determining character' of the 'soul' (He had described *Scoop* to his agents as 'light and excellent'.) They were, like John Plant's novels, subtle exercises in literary technique in which technical felicity had become an end in itself.

On the other hand, he had no desire to denigrate craftsmanship. Indeed, he became increasingly absorbed by the potential richness of the English language. What he needed was a more elaborate style which could draw on this wealth but which avoided those aspects of the modern novel he most abhorred—the detailed psychological discussion of motivation, the intellectual conversation, the obscure ramblings of the unconscious. His dislike of these characteristics was in part aesthetic—they represented to him a failure to distinguish between art and 'life' and an inability intelligibly to 'communicate'—but essentially theological. The 'humanist' novel, he argued, in denying the reality of the supernatural, denied also the concept of Original Sin any by implication asserted the potential perfectibility of man. His criticisms in reviews of Wells's optimism and Huxley's disillusion were firmly based on this assumption. But he found himself now, for the first time since 1928, faced with the need to describe optimism—the sensations of hope, of love, of completeness generated both by his devotion to Laura and the feeling of total absorption in the Catholic way of life. Combined and confused with these emotions were those natural to a homeless bachelor who marries late—a tendecy to sentimentalize, an unspoken fear of intrusion upon his carefully-ordered privacy.

Thus the 'climacteric', which he described as affecting

European writers 'at the age of 40', began for Waugh in the early years of his marriage 1937–39. It is this which is so carefully, if indirectly, analysed in *Work Suspended*. *Scoop* had been written in the old style but during the unusually long and strenuous period of its composition he had become acutely aware of its limitations. *Robbery Under Law*, for all its propagandist gusto, was a difficult and boring book to write. His reviews of this period lacked originality and enthusiasm. In every area of his literary life he seemed to be drying up, capable only of the reiteration of old views. It was not simply a question of the depressing encroachment of socialism or the prospect of another war. He welcomed the war when it came as an opportunity for a positive defence of his values. But he seemed to have used up his resources. There was an element of manic despair at the thought of another thirty years of novel writing with nothing new to say and an acute consciousness of artistic inadequacy.

Work Suspended was embarked upon cautiously. It represented an innovation, a fictional approach which allowed controlled sentimentality and sensuous description. For the first time, he introduced the conventional authorial 'voice', commenting on the action. There can be no doubt that to Waugh this new 'novel' was the most important thing he had attempted since *A Handful Of Dust* (1934). But he did not quite know how to go about it. The first diary reference records: 'I have re-written the first chapter of the novel about six times and at last got it into tolerable shape' (*Diaries*, 27 June 1939, p. 433). Waugh's previous practice had been to send off sections for typing as he completed them and make his alterations to the typescript, often shuffling pages like a pack of cards. This meticulous attention to the manuscript was a radical departure. It was moreover, his first 'novel' to draw heavily on intimate autobiographical material. Perhaps for this reason and certainly because it represented a technical experiment progress was slow.

Domestic interruptions hampered him further. His rural seclusion was disturbed by ludicrous Civil Defence preparations. He was engaged in a dispute with the *Daily Mail* over a misrepresentative review of *Robbery Under Law* and involved with the internal wrangles of the board of Chapman and Hall. His home, Piers Court, was closed down for three weeks on 14 July and Waugh and Laura left to stay with her family at Pixton Park only to find it crammed with guests and uninhabitable. He could only bear it for a fortnight but drew some solace from his increased interest in landscape gardening and domestic architecture and the occasional stabs at the 'novel'. Back at Piers Court in August he began to despair of ever making a lasting impression on his house and grounds. He reviewed for the *Spectator,* worked in the garden and watched the news of approaching war almost with enthusiasm: 'As in September of last year', he remarks in the diary, 'it is difficult to concentrate on work at the moment' (*Diaries,* 23 Aug., 1939, p. 437).

With the 'invention' of Atwater, however, the novel began to move again. On 26 August he noted: 'Worked well at novel. I have introduced the character who came here to beg saying he was on the *New Statesman* and an authority on ballistics, as the driver who killed the father'. At the time he was considering enlistment as a private: 'I have to consider thirty years of novel-writing ahead of me. Nothing would be more likely than work in a government office to finish me as a writer; nothing more likely to stimulate me than a complete change of habit. There is a symbolic difference between fighting as a soldier and serving as a civilian, even if the civilian is more valuable' (*Diaries,* p. 438). Nevertheless 'to please Laura rather than with any hope of result' he did apply for a civilian post.

His brother Alec had been taken back into the army without hesitation but Evelyn's various applications seemed uniformly to be blocked. It was a period of extraordinary uncertainty and frustration. Piers Court was let for the duration and Waugh, Laura and their baby (Teresa) moved once again to Pixton. Before long, however, the strains of the overburdened household became too great. 'Work out of the question', he records, 'as the evacuated children are now admitted to the garden at the back of the house under my windows' (*Diaries,* 19 Oct., 1939, p. 447). On the 23 October he left for the Easton Court Hotel 'in the hope of getting my novel finished, or nearly finished, by the time I could take Laura from Pixton'. Laura was then eight months pregnant with their second child.

At the hotel he began to work well and after his first full day there noted: 'Wrote all the morning. The second chapter taking shape and, more important, ideas springing' (*Diaries,* 24 Oct., 1939, p. 447). A new enthusiasm gripped him and deprived him of sleep. 'I take the Ms of my novel up to my bedroom for fear it should be burned in the night. It has in fact got to interest me so much that for the first time since the war began I have ceased to fret about not being on active service' (*Diaries,* 'All Saints' [1 Nov.], 1939, p. 448). Almost as soon as he had begun in earnest, two events prevented his bringing the exciting project to its conclusion: on 18 November Auberon was born and on 7 December he was called up to join the Marines at Chatham. Despite the interruptions he had managed to write over ten thousand words at the hotel.

Waugh described Laura after the birth as 'happier than she is likely to be again', and 'drowsy and contented' (*Diaries,* p. 450). It is, surely, no coincidence that the birth of Lucy's baby plays such a prominent part in the unfinished novel. Waugh was drawing, for the first time, on the experience of the immediate present.

Work Suspended was the first of Waugh's novels to use first person narration and, although various aspects of his personality and attitudes are distributed between John Plant and his father, it is largely autobiographical. In John we find the practical, workmanlike approach to fiction, the growing consciousness of the evils of contemporary society, the older man with the young woman and the spiritual exile with a mild distrust of his contemporaries. In the father we see the immediate abandonment of popular causes, the aesthetic tradition of representational, communicative art, the abomination of the standards of his youth, the rejection of Clive Bell and Bloomsbury, and an almost perverse delight in formality: the 'huge grim and solitary jest' (of his 'Academy' teas) at the expense of his friends and the contemporary artistic establishment.

The Ms and the Chapman and Hall (1942) edition, barring accidentals, largely correspond but the reprint in

Work Suspended And Other Stories (Chapman and Hall, 1949) was substantially revised, and this is the version reprinted by Penguin Books, and the most widely known. Waugh tinkered with the earlier text, transforming it from a very personal document into a more soberly 'topical' allegory. Mr. Plant's unfinished picture was originally dated 1932 and represented: 'an old shipwright pondering on the idle dockyard where lay the great skeleton of the Cunarder that was later to be known as the Queen Mary. It was to have been called "Too Big?"' (p. 22). This became the 1939 painting 'Again?', of 'a one-armed veteran of the First World War meditating over a German helmet' (Penguin, p. 119). The father's anti-Semitism is much less explicit in the later text. The phrase: '"I could tell they [the property developers] were Jews . . . by the smell of their notepaper"' is omitted; 'Israelite' replaces 'Jew', and these attitudes are not quietly endorsed by the discovery that Mr. Hardcastle is Jewish. John Plant is no longer approached by Mr. Godley who fears blackmail over the father's 'restoration' work because the Jellabies have already attempted extortion; Roger Simmonds becomes a 'Socialist' rather than a Communist. The titles of the two parts are altered: 'My Father's House' becoming 'A Death', and 'Lucy Simmonds' 'A Birth'. The only substantial addition to the original is the 'Postscript' which moves the story forward to 1939; the other alterations to dates (and, for instance, to the description of Mr. Plant's painting) were made to concur with this shift in historical perspective.

Revision generally took the form of omission. The 1942 text dealt in detail with John Plant's literary technique, emphasizing his relish in 'Gothic enrichments' and 'the masked buttresses, false domes, superfluous columns, all the subterfuges of literary architecture and the plaster and gilt of its decoration'. A long and important passage was cut from 'Part Two' outlining the essential limitations of the novelist's aesthetic:

> The algebra of fiction must reduce its problems to symbols if they are to be soluble at all . . . There is no place in literature for a live man, solid and active. At

> best the author may maintain a kind of Dickensian menagerie, where his characters live behind bars in darkness, to be liberated twice nightly under the arc lamps . . . 'Are the lions really alive?' 'Yes, lovey.' 'Will they eat us up?' 'No lovey, the man won't let them'—that is all the reviewers mean as a rule when they talk of 'life'. The alternative, classical expedient is to take the whole man and reduce him to manageable abstraction . . . Beyond these limits lie only the real trouser buttons and crepe hair with which the futurists used to adorn their paintings. It is, anyway, in the classical way that I have striven to write, how else can I write of Lucy? (pp. 82–3)

The revisions, then, are 'cosmetic'; while increasing the topical relevance and toning down the invective of the story Waugh altered nothing of its essence as an autobiographical document. In the original text the war is not even mentioned. The technical literary discussion was probably omitted on aesthetic grounds for it represented material which might have been interesting in a magazine article but which bore no structural relevance to the plot (a critical point frequently reiterated in his reviews). Perhaps more importantly, it revealed too much of himself. Both Plant's and Waugh's aesthetic relied on the concept of art as artifice; it should have 'absolutely nothing of [himself] in it'. (Penguin, p. 108). This was the paradox at the heart of his 'climacteric'—the problem of describing the subjective objectively.

The novel is not, then, simply a reaction to the war but a discussion of deep-rooted personal aesthetic problems which the revisions attempt to disguise and objectify. The unfinished 1932 picture 'Too Big?' no doubt represented to Waugh the decay of traditional craftsmanship, the loss of the individual vision. The distance and formality of the relationship between father and son is a reflection of his estrangement from his own father. Mr. Plant senior lives in 1932, like Waugh in 1939, believing himself secure behind the 'massive defences of "the border line of sanity" ', yet obsessed by anti-Semitism and the intrusion of gross modern architecture; 'the destruction of my father's house' is clearly a major theme. It becomes more an image of the aesthetic heritage of the English consciousness than a parental home. It is not a place of warmth and security; it has no intrinsic aesthetic merit. But it represents, with its Morris wallpapers and fabrics, the last flourish of a valuable line of English artistic development in which the virtues of honest craftsmanship were paramount.

In altering and ironically inverting the titles of the two parts Waugh drew greater attention to the central theme of decay and regeneration. The birth is the birth of the new age; what has died with the father can never be replaced by the son. In the first section Waugh speaks of 'the hide and seek with one's own personality' and the exposing of 'the bare minimum of ourselves' as a characteristic of modern 'civilized' man. The violation of privacy becomes a subtle *leit-motif*. A high price is set on 'Modesty' and it is this which is raped by Atwater and the seedy world of pre-war Britain. In travelling home from Fez, John moves 'from spring into winter'. (Waugh had written the early chapters of *A Handful Of Dust* in Fez in 1933.) With the death of his father, who had 'an historic position, for he completed a period of English painting', he begins to realise the plight of 'civilized' man, a strange hybrid and artificial creature:

> For the civilized man there are none of those swift transitions of joy and pain which possess the savage: words form slowly like pus about his hurts: there are no clean wounds for him: first a numbness, then a long festering, then a scar ever ready to re-open. Not until they have assumed the livery of defence can his emotions pass through the lines . . . Sabotage behind the lines, a blind raised and lowered at a lighted window, a wire cut, a bolt loosened, a file disordered— that is how civilized man is undone. (Penguin, pp. 130–1)

The substantially altered prose style reveals a new commitment—a more passionate evocation and a desire to work through analysis rather than implication.

Work Suspended is essentially an exposition of John Plant's 'climacteric' as a writer. There is no direct correspondence between Plant's and Waugh's novels other than their mutual delight in craftsmanship; no hint is given as to the outcome of Plant's problem—a metaphor, surely, for Waugh's own. Like Plant, he had no idea where it would end. Both marriage and the certain prospect of socialist government represented an assault on his private world, the first willingly embraced, the second, he considered, attempting to subvert his individuality. He only knew that he needed 'new worlds to conquer' and feared that he might mechanically be 'turning out year after year the kind of book [he knew he could] write well', 'becoming purely a technical expert' (Penguin, p. 132).

The 'sense of homelessness' becomes a companion theme to that of the invasion of privacy. Plant is driven to the seclusion of the countryside; he no longer belongs to the London of his youth. This was amplified by Waugh in later works where refugees, numberless hordes of anonymous individuals are herded from place to place. The condition of 'homelessness' he saw as symptomatic of a society which condemned private property and discouraged individualism. Roger Simmonds in *Work Suspended* writes a play titled 'Internal Combustion'. The ' "characters are economic types, not individuals . . ." ', Simmonds explains; ' ". . . as long as they look and speak like individuals it is bad art . . . I've cut out human beings altogether." ' It is an absurd parody of Waugh's own concept of 'a manageable abstraction' and another dig at functionalist art. Where in *Decline And Fall* (1928) Waugh had been content with a mild satire of the Bauhaüs ideas of Otto Silenus's architecture, here he is more trenchant. Simmonds's aesthetic is precisely the reverse of Waugh's and his socialism is seen as negative and fashionable. The problem of privacy is encapsulated in the tension between 'perpetual flight and perpetual siege' and, politically, Waugh cannot conceive of a liberal society without private property or with dialectical art.

Atwater is, therefore, an important symbolic agent in the story. He lacks masculinity, is a scrounger, an uncultured and insensitive confidence trickster, whining about injustice, living by his wits. He is without the merest common decency and, in asking for the return of the money for the wreath, becomes a focus for the hideous paradoxes

Waugh saw in 'liberal' or 'rationalist' politics: 'So I put a note in an envelope and sent it to the man who had killed my father'. Civilization has come to represent an exact inversion of traditional values.

There seems no choice but to comply with the 'exploiters' who turn out to be represented by the struggling Mr. Hardcastle, enmeshed in 'the kaleidoscopic changes of small finance'. The Pre-Raphaelite ideal is destroyed as bulldozers effortlessly wreck the family home. But it is essentially an anonymous, rather than a malicious, force at work. There is no discernible enemy to attack and this is precisely 'the plight of civilized man' and the significance of the imagery of espionage in the passage quoted above (p. 314).

The second section of *Work Suspended* deals with the three things which occupied Waugh's own attention in 1939: the new country house, the new baby, and (in the 1949 version) the imminent war. The reasons for moving out of town are carefully analysed. Plant's friends encourage him for the selfish reason of having somewhere to visit at weekends. But there is a more serious aesthetic argument. His generation, he says:

> . . . professed a specialized enthusiasm for domestic architecture. It was one of the peculiarities of my generation, and there is no accounting for it. In youth we had pruned our aesthetic emotions hard back so that in many cases they had reverted to briar stock: we none of us wrote or read poetry or, if we did, it was of a kind which left unsatisfied those wistful, half-romantic, half-aesthetic, peculiarly British longings . . . When the poetic mood was upon us we turned to buildings, and gave them a place which our fathers accorded to Nature—to almost any buildings, but particularly to those in the classical tradition, and, more particularly, in its decay. (Penguin, pp. 145–6)

This is clearly autobiographical—Waugh even mentions William Halfpenny, some of whose works he had purchased during the composition of the novel.

Further strong elements of autobiography are apparent. Plant and his contemporaries 'defame' their own work as a gesture towards modesty. Lucy is a 'serious' and 'critical' girl, in many respects like Laura. Plant, like Waugh, considers marriage 'an honourable profession'; he respects 'the permanence of the arrangement'. It is the intimacy of this material which demands the new prose style and it noticeably strains under the pressure. In trying to describe the sensation of 'love' Plant (or Waugh) ends by relinquishing the attempt, saying that it is 'beyond the proper scope of letters'. It seems probable, however, that the whole book is to some degree an abstract attempt to define the nature of his feelings for Laura and the way in which these feelings had altered his artistic vision.

Lucy's social ease, her *savoir-faire,* is faultless but not in any superficial metropolitan sense. She has solved the 'question of intrusion' in that she is impervious to insult and seems at home with everyone. Plant's initial feelings in her presence were that 'we had no separate or individual existence'. She is an aristocrat and a socialist. Plant finds her provocative because he, the artist, wishes to 'assert . . . [his] separate and individual existence'. The cool amiability of Lucy represents 'a tiny disorder' in his life. He wishes to control 'the mirrored corridor of cumulative emotion'.

It is an a-sexual relationship. The current Penguin edition calls it 'a highly illicit love affair with his best friend's heavily pregnant wife'. There is, of course, no question of adultery as it is taken for granted by Waugh that the pregnancy suspends sexual relations.[8] It is certainly a 'love affair' but of an extraordinary kind. Waugh seems to suggest that, were sex no longer an issue, a man and a woman could enjoy close friendship untainted by sentimentality. Plant 'moves for advantage' in the 'parlour game' of their love and Lucy comes to represent the 'lithe, chaste, unstudied nudity' of a savage, a Romantic ideal ironically transferred to the modern age. 'Her lack of shyness cut her off' from him. The 'competitive parlour game' between himself and his contemporaries forms an artificial reality which excludes her. He feels too old to return wholeheartedly to her stage of innocent exchange.

Into this complex, almost as a third party to the relationship, Waugh introduces Humboldt's Gibbon. It appears to represent the daemonically beautiful. Controlled yet fierce and vital, grotesque but beyond the world of nannies' snobbery or Marxist dogma, it is perhaps a last image of the exotic and stimulating forces being crushed in a world determined on a course of standardisation. He has no 'tricks', 'or, if he had, performed them alone, for his own satisfaction, after dark, ritualistically . . .'. He is possibly symbolic of primal individuality; like the 'real' artist, he is careless of the desire to impress. The hollow men surrounding Plant adopt convenient rôles and he himself wants somewhere to hang his hats,[9] somewhere to house his partial social identities under one roof. The relationship with Lucy and the 'beauty' of Humboldt's Gibbon appear to offer some hope but, with the birth of the baby, sentimentality—the hackneyed slack emotions of maternity—intrudes; Lucy's clarity becomes clouded and she sinks back into the new age, her vocabulary reduced to 'sweet' and 'Kempy'.

Doubtless Waugh felt that the first edition did not make his point strongly enough when in the 1949 revision, with the hindsight of the war, he added the 'Postscript'. In this the theme of the 'petrified egg' is reinforced by the image of the beavers in a concrete pool, which, with futile efforts, damn 'the ancestral stream'. Traditional values, bulwarks against chaos (controls on the flood) are now without point. In his dedication to Alexander Woollcott Waugh remarked: '. . . even if I were again to have the leisure to finish it, the work would be vain, for the world in which and for which it was designed, has ceased to exist'. Plant's house is requisitioned, his father's house destroyed, Lucy lost for ever. The novel, like Waugh's own, remains 'a heap of neglected foolscap at the back of a drawer'.

Before being called up Waugh wrote to John Betjeman enclosing 'the first chapter of a novel I have been writing and have discontinued. It would have been O.K.'[10] In his correspondence with Betjeman a little later he complains bitterly at the poet's desire to join a defensive regiment: 'The only way to bring this business to a happy conclusion is to kill a great number of Germans. If we go on thinking only of defence there will be nothing worth defending. Why do you prefer defence? I can't understand it.'[11] The discontinuation of the novel was symbolic. Its theme was, at least in part, an attempt to analyse why the civilized man's emotions must 'assume the livery of defence' before they can 'pass through the lines'. That shyness was now abandoned; an aggressive attitude was adopted after being so long submerged in an inability openly to wage war on the polite belief in the inevitable progress of humanity. The problem had been that there was no obvious enemy. Now, as he expressed it (ironically) in *Men at Arms* (1952):

> . . . splendidly, everything had become clear. The enemy was plain in view, huge and hateful, all disguise cast off. It was the Modern Age in arms. Whatever the outcome there was a place for him in that battle. (p. 5)

Guy Crouchback comes later to see even this as an illusion but it fairly represents Waugh's own crusading spirit in 1939.

Ultimately, we can only guess at the real reasons for Waugh's inability to complete *Work Suspended*. His explanatory dedication to Woollcott represents only one aspect of the truth. But perhaps it was simply because he felt that he had failed to resolve the aesthetic problem of rendering the subjective objectively. 'Objectivity' in his post-war work relies on the assumption of a higher reality ultimately governing the action, where the 'determining character of the human soul' is 'that of being God's creature with a defined purpose'. No such dimension had been built into *Work Suspended* and Waugh may have decided that to continue his normal, externalised analysis of behaviour was meaningless; the negative assertion of order through an evocation of the sordid, chaotic and sentimental now seemed inadequate. He had effected the stylistic but not the thematic transformation.

The novel thus became a curiosity to him, a museum piece made redundant by the fact that the characterization failed to fit with the technical experiments. He would have needed completely to re-write the sections we have in order to include the dimension of 'supernatural' reality. Possibly, he was a little afraid of it. Although *Put Out More Flags* (1942) employs the fuller, more sensuous prose style, if anything it regresses towards the well-tried negative suggestion. Only in *Brideshead Revisited* (referred to throughout the letters of 1944 as 'Magnum Opus') did he take up the challenge he had set himself and, in so doing, largely lost his critical reputation.

University of Edinburgh

NOTES

[1] *The Tablet*, 7 January, 1933, 10.

[2] "An Open Letter to H.E. The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster' (Ms. held by University of Texas), p. 1.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[4] 'Unpublished letter, undated (probably 5 August, 1936), to Laura Herbert from 'Grand Hotel,, Subasio, Assisi'.

[5] "The New Countryman', *Spectator*, 8 July, 1938, 54.

[6] "The Waste Land', *Spectator*, 10 March, 1939, 413–414. Review of Greene's *The Lawless Roads*.

[7] 'Fan-Fare', *Life Magazine*, April 1946, 53–60.

[8] Cf. *Work Suspended* (Penguin), p. 163: 'deprived of sex, as women are, by its own fulfilment . . .'

[9] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

[10] Unpublished letter, undated (probably late November, 1939 to John Betjeman from Piers Court.

[11] Unpublished letter, undated (probably January, 1940) to John Betjeman from 'Kingsdowne House Camp, Walmer'.

Book Reviews

DISSENT

A Gathered Church: The Literature of The English Dissenting Interest, 1700–1930. By DONALD DAVIE. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978; £4.25.

Those distinguished scholars, novelists or poets whom Cambridge has honoured with an invitation to give the Clark Lectures have either, like Humphry House and C. S. Lewis, considered a favourite author or tract of literary history, or else, like E. M. Forster and Cecil Day Lewis, reflected on some aspect of their craft. Being renowned both as scholar and as poet, Dr. Davie might have done either. In striking out from his anchorage in the eighteenth century to survey an extensive and neglected territory, the Dissenting tradition from Isaac Watts to D. H. Lawrence, he questions common beliefs and exposes shibboleths with the audacity of C. S. Lewis. Nevertheless, his 1976 Clark Lectures, *A Gathered Church*, record with the urbane candour of Dr. Davie's own verse not only a scholar's journey but a poet's. Their title, a phrase commonly used to differentiate Baptist and Independent congregations formed of the 'elect' in an entire city or region from Anglican parishes, heads that section of 'Dissentient Voice' (in *A Winter Talent,* 1957), in which Dr. Davie honours the memory of his grandfather, a Baptist deacon. In his *Collected Poems, 1950–70,* he notes that the poem 'actually follows out the process of thus winning to the concrete through the abstract—the church I was brought up in represents itself to me . . . as a pattern of doctrines and doctrinal cruxes; only after . . . a free play . . . of ideas and distinctions, can I win through to an apprehension of Dissent as embodied and make concrete in the personality of my grandfather.'

At Cambridge, reading English Literature and intending to write poetry, Davie found his position 'anomalous' and 'self-contradictory', for were not chapel-goers 'the enemy', intent on destroying or at least emasculating 'graven images'? This tension marked out his path to the Clark Lecturer's podium. His recollections of an undergraduate society commemorating the early nineteenth-century preacher and editor Robert Hall, his creative surprise at the craftsmanship of Watts and Wesley—which inspired his book *Purity of Diction*—and his pleasure in Augustan coolness and clarity (so often evident in his own verse) all contributed to his determination to explode, as a 'hoary *canard*' of the Anglican Establishment, the common assumption that Puritanism and its child Dissent are by nature philistine and anti-intellectual. Although Dr. Leavis has praised the Dissenting tradition as a social influence, Dr. Davie can define it with an authority acquired by having, as C. S. Lewis would say, 'enjoyed' rather than merely 'contemplated' the Baptist faith.

This personal search for justification accounts for not only what is most original in the scholarship of *A Gathered Church,* its filling of *lacunae* in the literary tradition, its shifting of aesthetic landmarks and boundaries, but also for its breaking of images—notably that of Matthew Arnold—and for some of its quirks. Most notable among these is a hatred of Wilberforce's generation of Anglican Evangelicals that prompts him to saddle them with the entire blame for the horrors of ecclesiastical 'restorations', to accuse them of having 'posthumously appropriated' those devout Anglican Evangelical hymnodists Cowper and Newton, and even to suggest that the campaign against the slave-trade 'had the perhaps intended effect of stifling all protests . . . at injustices, nearer home'. Here one can but protest, that, to quote Mark Rutherford, 'Nothing is idler than disputes about the motives for virtuous deed'. For whatever Wilberforce and his followers did to end that vile commerce, they deserve nothing but honour.

Again a major theme in the lectures has its origins in a personal preoccupation. In 'The Evangelist', (in *Brides of Reason,* 1955), Davie notes the 'bland elastic smile', of a preacher whose 'style/Befits a church that's based on sentiment'. Later he adds:

> The tides of feeling round me rise and sink;
> Bunyan, however, found a place for wit.
> Yes, I am more persuaded than I think;
> Which is, perhaps, why I disparage it.

Admittedly literature owes most to the Evangelicals in a negative sense, as progenitors of Messrs. Pitt Crawley, Murdstone, Brocklehurst and Bulstrode. To the whole wave of religious 'enthusiasm', however, Dr. Davie attributes the 'swamping' of an 'Old Dissent' based on the 'accommodation', by Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge, of Calvinist theology to Augustan ethics and the stifling of a literary tradition based on a Calvinist aesthetic congenial to Augustan neo-classicism.

Dr. Davie gives the following account of the eclipse of Old Dissent. Watts from his fashionable pulpit and Doddridge in his lectureroom at a Dissenting academy endeavoured to moderate the ferocity of the Calvinism Bunyan had preached, to make that creed acceptable in a more civilised and tolerant age. (Dr. Davie chastises sentimentalists such as Scott and Leslie Stephen who indulge in nostalgia for Covenanting zeal.) They found poetic pleasure in no way incompatible with religion and morality; indeed, Watts employed images from the *Song of Songs*. Throughout the century, the scholarly and well-read Baptist or Independent ministers who delivered 'patient and formal exposition' of the Scriptures fought a losing battle against the rising tide of New Dissent. By the early nineteenth century, despite the labours of Robert Hall, the famous preacher and editor of the *Eclectic Review* (a journal as much literary as theological), and Michael Faraday the physicist, a Sandemanian preacher who nevertheless attended theatres and read Scott to his family, Old Dissent had declined to a remnant. Hall's readership was dwarfed by that of the *Evangelical Magazine*, and born-again Methodists or breakaway Baptists poured into vast new chapels to hear emotion-rousing sermons and sing hymns remarkable for 'enthusiasm' rather than sound doctrine.

Before his death in 1831, Hall came under savage attack, and by 1840, as Dr. Davie reluctantly concedes, Thomas Arnold could with justice diagnose the 'mental faults of the Dissenters' as 'narrowness of view' and want of 'learning and a sound critical spirit'. The splendid inheritance from Milton, Marvell and Bunyan had run out.

Some inconsistency appears in this account. The hymns of Watts and Doddridge, the Huguenot services and the photographs of Dissenting chapels—by accident or ironic design placed next to a denunciation of the star preacher Charles Spurgeon (a Victorian Billy Graham)—evince Calvin's aesthetic: 'Art is characterized by sobriety, simplicity, measure'. John Wesley, whose emotional proclamation to the masses of a simplified gospel was chiefly responsible for the decline of Old Dissent, remained aesthetically fastidious, Anglican and anti-Calvinist. The real villains in Davie's account, Whitefield and the aristocrats in the Clapham Sect who strove (like the luminaries in M.R.A. advertisements) to reform the nation from the top, were Calvinists to a man. Logically, Dr. Davie should object as much to Wesley's Toryism as to theirs, for he cites Halévy's dictum that Methodism saved England from revolution, and draws freely on Martha England, who in *Hymns Unbidden* describes the Wesleyan hymns as 'encouraging tyranny' by preaching '"contentment"'.

To a large extent, the inconsistency resides in the facts themselves. Dr. Davie admits to bewilderment about Wesley, while Ms. England concedes that by spreading literacy and the work-and-thrift ethic the Wesleyan discipline placed 'in thousands of hands the instruments of social change'. Moreover Ford Brown, whose disparagement of the Evangelicals in *Fathers and Victorians* came as grist to Dr. Davie's mill, shows Wilberforce relieving distress he personally encountered while blocking every effort to improve the condition of the poor through legislation.

Dr. Davie's grave and cogent indictment of Evangelicalism for an intellectual weakness, a 'softness at the centre', is best considered together with his revaluations of the Dissenting authors to whom he applies the Calvinist aesthetic of 'sobriety, simplicity, measure'. To this he ascribes Watts's principle of *kenosis*, a 'sinking' of poetic style to that spareness requisite for congregational use. 'Can it be an accident that artistic renunciation, *kenosis* in this sense, is common to Watts, to the French Protestant Gide, and to the lapsed Calvinist Mark Rutherford? It represents an aesthetic preference and principal integral to the Calvinist tradition, and therefore persisting to inform such as Gide and Mark Rutherford when the dogmatic and (in Gide's case) the ethical precepts of Calvinism had ceased to exert much if any claim'. After Bunyan and Defoe (left aside as a secular author), Dr. Davie includes in the tradition Watts, Doddridge, Charles Wesley, Blake, Rutherford and Lawrence. Tragically, the two authors of indisputable genius failed to profit from the tradition. Blake was born into 'a stream of religious experience too shallow to sustain him', Lawrence into 'a religious community that had lost its bearings and reneged on its inheritance'. In high eighteenth-century vein, Dr. Davie regards Blake as a casualty of 'enthusiasm', not a hero of but 'a martyr to' the 'democratizing of Scripture', the taking of religion to the people. Blake's *Songs,* he contends, employ the metres of Watts to express ideological resentments, 'cloaked in religious terminology', that would have horrified Watts. He finds the quasi-religious veneration of Blake a cause for alarm. That this veneration should have reached its apogee during the anti-Vietnam protests would imply to me that Blake's anarchism represented a reaction against the equal and opposite extremes of a law that sent infants to the gallows, of flogging-academies and charity-schools, and of a church at once the spiritual home of Mr. Collins or Mr. Elton and the spiritual arm of an imperial power waging wars denounced by many in similar terms to the Vietnam war. This seems consistent with Dr. Davie's account of Blake's 'dialectical' cast of mind as against Charles Wesley's aptitude for expressing Christian paradox.

Blake's anti-intellectualism and that of the Evangelicals whom the poet denounced are seen by Dr. Davie as two sides of the same coin, 'enthusiasm'. This is open to objection on two counts. First, in contrast to Methodist preaching, rational persuasion—whether by low and dry Dissenting ministers or by high and dry Anglican clergy—failed to reach factory-hands, peasants, miners, criminals and prostitutes. On the other hand, Wesley's simplification of Christian soteriology and the Evangelical devaluation of reason had ill-effects perhaps extending to our instant therapies, charismatic and 'born-again Christian' fanaticisms.

Secondly, Blake's moral over-simplification and obscurity, Dr. Davie suggests, arise from lack of coherent philosophy. In similar terms, T. S. Eliot has pointed 'to Blake's unfulfilled need for such a coherent structure of ideas as underpinned the *Divine Comedy*. Doubtless for reasons of time, Dr. Davie neither demonstrates incoherence in Blake's use of symbols, nor explains why he thinks current research on that poet's sources and background unlikely to affect his judgment.

In Lawrence's Eastwood Chapel, the decline of what Davie calls the 'sinewy sobrieties' of Congregationalism into 'vague hymn-singing pietism' (here Davie agrees with T. S. Eliot) can best be illustrated from *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane*. In Rutherford's novel, much loved by Lawrence, that chapel politician John Broad has taken over the meeting house from a perfervid Evangelical, himself the supplanter of an Old Dissenter whose discourses 'taxed the whole mental powers of his audience . . . unlike the simple stuff which became fashionable with the Evangelistic movement'. To Dr. Leavis's defence of Eastwood Chapel as a centre of social life Dr. Davie replies that the chapel's primary functions were worship and the celebration of the sacraments, and that a major preoccupation in Lawrence's novels is his effort to assuage a hunger and thirst for the divine. Although this apologia for ritual, late in the book, comes as a surprise, it ties in with the earlier denunciation of the Unitarian intellectuals who substituted abstractions for images. *Pace* Rutherford, Old Dissent comprised both a rational theology and the act of worship. The concern with Christian social behaviour in the Congregational hymnal of 1859, when the rot had supposedly set in, raises doubt about Dr. Davie's argument. Numinous awe radiates from the Christian folk-poems of a millennium or more, but among English hymnodists only Doddridge, Smart and occasionally Watts enjoin kindness to the poor. The Marxist case that to turn heart and mind towards God is to direct them away from the organised betterment of the human lot, if not unanswerable, remains to be answered. On Dr. Leavis's premise, to direct a congregation's feelings outward towards social service would be to enhance the communal life and thereby justify the chapel's existence.

With Blake and Lawrence spiritually deformed, the dissenting tradition consists of one great and one minor hymnwriter, Watts and Doddridge, of the Wesleys who were neither Dissenters nor Calvinists, and of a lapsed Calvinist, Hale White, who from his lost faith salvaged whatever might prove valuable in the industrial age.

Watts's poems show the ambivalence John Hoyles detects in his philosophy. In his objective eschatology, he looks backward towards Spenser and Milton, but in his emotional response to an imagined figure on the 'wondrous Cross', he anticipates Wesley and the Romantics. Zion he envisages both as enclosed garden and as 'people and realms of every tongue'. Those hymns still in use typify the subjectively emotional and ecumenical rather than the neo-classical and sectarian Watts. Even the history of 'O God our help in ages past', so perceptively and lovingly dwelt on by Dr. Davie as tribal lay in oral mode and as prime example of *kenosis,* involves an expansion of the 'tribe' from a recently-tolerated Dissenting community to the whole English-speaking family of nations. Such an expansion created the ecumenical sentiment before any proposal for reunion. As almost a required item in official services, however, 'O God our help' became a vehicle for the transference of religious feeling to the nation-state.

While Dr. Davie convinces us that Mark Rutherford's novels, notably *Catherine Furze,* are overdue for rehabilitation, his passing mention of Ian Watt's *Rise of the Novel* does not suffice to trace the concentration and astringent beauty of Rutherford's best prose back to the precursors of Richardson, or indeed to any source but the novelist's own reflective integrity. Even if Mrs. Furze's social climbing appears more plausible than that of Christina Pontifex, few undergraduates seem likely to close their Butler and open their Rutherford, for who that is young and irreverent would not trade Mrs. Furze's entire conversation for but one of Christina's daydreams? The mature reader, however, may find Rutherford's reflections the more satisfying. He may prize, for example, Catherine Furze's response to Mr. Bellamy, who has dismissed her speculation about a heaven for animals ('What's the Lord to do with all the dead horses and cows?'): 'Catherine thought, "Or with the dead men and women", but she said nothing. The subject was new to her'. By comparison with other Victorian writers perplexed about religion, Rutherford stands out as more honest than Tennyson, more robust than Thomson, more of an artist than Gissing. It is doubtful, however, whether he can bear the weight Dr. Davie puts upon him. Can one find the 'dry but *devout* clarity' of the eighteenth century in a self-styled Christian who has rejected the Incarnation, or exemplify Dissenting culture from one who regards reading Byron as a cause of impurity in young men? One hopes, however, that Dr. Davie's revaluation will encourage Leicester University Press to continue reprinting the Rutherford novels.

Dr. Davie's most notable achievement in these erudite but compulsively readable discourses is to convey three insights for which he deserves our gratitude. The first is our need to outgrow the prudery expressed in Leslie Stephen's remark (a counterpart to Johnson's on hymns) that 'Sacred poetry and religious novels belong to a world of their own'. This prudery, as Dr. Davie insists, has led literary scholars to abandon hymns to Marxist historians who tear phrases from their contexts and impute traditional motifs like the 'blood of the Lamb' to class hatred or personal morbidity, forcing their interpretations upon poems neglected by critics. This and earlier studies by Dr. Davie and Bernard Manning have amply demonstrated that the hymns of Watts, Wesley and others, sung by a larger proportion of English-speaking people than ever read Swift, Johnson or Wordsworth, perhaps by a larger proportion than now play pop records, did in fact constitute the lyric poetry the eighteenth century is widely supposed not to have produced. Why, then, should English departments prescribe medieval and metaphysical religious lyrics yet neglect even the best from the eighteenth century?

This silent agreement to seal off religious lyrics from the supposed 'mainstream' of English poetry since 1700 could reflect the collective embarrassment of a society that neither 'enjoys' Christian belief nor 'contemplates' the Gospels as mythology. There is less embarrassment about singing and hearing negro spirituals on Old Testament stories, or Latin masses and motets. We perhaps inhabit a spiritual no-man's-land between John Wesley's view of poetry as 'handmaid of piety' and ours of older poems that employ classical myths. Whatever our belief or unbelief, *A Gathered Church* underlines the need for the inclusion of hymns, according to merit, in collections of poetry.

Dr. Davie's second insight is the link between the Calvinist aesthetic and neo-classical decorum, on the one hand, and between Evangelical and Romantic values on the other. The latter analogy can be verified by comparison of Wesley's Preface to *Hymns for People called Methodists* (1780) with Wordsworth's famous Preface. Why, incidentally, does Wesley's Preface not appear in collections of critical pronouncements? The question of the influence of hymns on popular consciousness may be less intractable than Dr. Davie suggests, for much can be learned from the items constantly reprinted in hymnals.

His third and more tentative perception is that the aesthetic of fiction needed for appreciation of Rutherford's novels must differ fundamentally from that underlying the 'illusionistic' Victorian novel. Rutherford's art corresponds less to photography than to line-drawing that builds its impressions from 'least suggestions'. Among Dr. Davie's beneficiaries may be some future novelist who profits by the analogy he draws between Rutherford's novels and imagist poetry or Beckettian drama.

A Gathered Church says so much, in so companionable a way, that one could wish it twice as long. Two minor blemishes are the insufficiently precise reference of the lengthy and interesting notes, not quite either footnotes or appendices, and the somewhat embarrassingly personal reminiscences of communion services. In Davie's own lines, the volume is

> None the less
> A breakthrough into spaciousness
> New reaches charted for the mind,
> Is solid service to mankind.

University of Victoria
British Columbia

LIONEL ADEY

THE POUND PROSE

Ezra Pound: Selected Prose 1909–1965. Edited, with an Introduction by WILLIAM COOKSON. Faber and Faber, 1973; £6; £3.50 paper.

'He evolved almost a new medium, a sort of expression half way between writing and action. This was a definite creation, as the Napoleonic code was creation.' Pound wrote this about the prose of Lenin. We are now in a good position to assess Pound's own definite creation in prose, because a large selection has been made by William Cookson, reprinted as a paperback; it includes the remark about Lenin, from an essay in *The Exile* of 1928. The selection begins with extracts from a series of very early essays from *The New Age* (1911–12) called 'I gather the Limbs of Osiris'. Apart from *The Spirit of Romance,* published eighteen months earlier, this is Pound's first substantial prose work and shows how early the familiar principles were voiced. An editorial note promised 'expositions and translations in illustration of "The New Method" in scholarship', so Pound began in 1911 what he continued in 1937 when he wished to call his latest book 'The New Learning' rather than *Guide to Kulchur*. The method was that of 'Luminous Detail', the ideogrammic method, or that of the contemporary biologist, as he called it in 1934 in *ABC of Reading*: 'continual COMPARISON of one "slide" or specimen with another'. He also says in 'I gather the Limbs of Osiris' that 'I am not a prose artist. Writing prose is an art, but it is not my art'. I suggest that between 1912 and 1922 Pound became more conscious of himself as a prose artist, that he began to prepare himself to be one, that his artistry in prose evolved as he shaped a sense of what his life's subject was to be. I should like to dwell on this briefly, before turning to Mr. Cookson's selection.

During the War, and after, Pound's *true* Penelope was Joyce, where the growth of his prose was concerned. In 1914 he found in Joyce an 'international standard' of prose writing, what he himself, as a disciple of Stendhal and Flaubert, would have written 'were I a prose writer' (Forrest Read, *Pound/Joyce,* letters and essays, p. 29 and 32). The standard acquired more value: 'the hell of contemporary Europe is caused by the lack of representative government in Germany, *and* by the non-existence of decent prose in the German language' (Read, p. 90). Prose had meant Flaubert and the element the old guard versifiers could not accommodate with poetry. After 1917 Pound's interest in and anger on behalf of a high prose standard began to extend beyond the *atelier*. He moved from prose to print. In 1942 he reminisced: 'The means a nation chooses (or lets be chosen) for the distribution of books and printed matter are of importance. For the last hundred years few have worried about them'. In the summer of 1917 he worried enough to descend into the stews of print, from which he brought back a series of reports on the Press for *The New Age* (16 August 1917—10 January 1918; not in Cookson) called 'Studies in Contemporary Mentality'. Pound wanted to make a book of the essays, 'but no publisher has wanted to reprint the series, which was, in any case, cut short by the protests of the readers of the said journal. Yet the whole system is collapsing, and for want of having paid attention to the symptoms of its own defilement' (Cookson, p. 302). After the War Pound began to make a connexion between the 'filth of print' and the 'hell of contemporary Europe'. In the autumn of 1919 the Cyclops chapter of *Ulysses* arrived at the office of *The Little Review*; Pound thought it was 'perhaps the best thing he has done' (Paige, p. 151). Joyce, he said later, 'has set out to do an inferno, and he has done an inferno'; later still, in *Guide to Kulchur,* he said 'Here was the JOB DONE and finished, the diagnosis and cure was here'. Joyce showed the fungoid growths of print, sentimental journalistic rhetoric, which camouflaged the real phenomena of the time, the 'domination of capital' or, as he called it in another review in *Mercure de France,* 'le monde sous le joug de l'usure démesurée'; he works out from Ireland under British domination to 'the whole occident' under the yoke of finance. The hell Cantos (XIV and XV) referred specifically to this period, 'LONDON in 1919 and 1920', and these phenomena. (For these references to hell and *Ulysses,* see Paige, p. 239 and Read, p. 198 and 208.) Pound was equally repelled by the United States, in which his early boyhood had been 'adorned with the bustuous noises of Kipling and the first Mr. Roosevelt' (Cookson, p. 92). By the end of 1920 he had settled in Paris, where his campaign for *Ulysses* reached its climax in essays for *The Dial* and *Mercure de France* in June 1922. In *Ulysses* Joyce showed the integrity of the word menaced by camouflage. He was a Rabelaisian historian, exceeding even Flaubert in his creation of 'une encyclopédie imbécile'. Pound compares the novel to *Bouvard et Pécuchet*: 'Joyce has found a more expeditious method of summary and analysis . . . in Ulysses anything may occur at the moment . . . Bloom is *polumetis* [many-minded, as Pound had called himself] and a receiver of all things' (Read, p. 208 and 195).

I suggest that in Pound's reference to the curative properties of *Ulysses,* and especially his two points about its encyclopaedic effectiveness and how in it *anything may occur at any moment* we find him formulating a belief in a mode of prose of his own. He was to design educational alphabets and was deliberately 'expeditious'. His later textbooks and the compression of his prose were principled, what he would have called 'inventions'. Neither were methods to which a busy poet resorted to get the matter out quickly: the virtue of the prose is not merely epistolary, uninhibited or casual. In 1919 he wrote somewhat defiantly about his manner of stringing together quotations and episodes: 'I put these pellets in this manner, not merely as a confession of how I catch myself thinking, but because other people think no better, because the burnt-in detail is tied by no more visible cords to the next detail, and is found no more demonstrably with the underlying conviction-plus-passion' (*New Age,* 21 August 1919). Joyce increased his confidence.

If one is to generalise about the Pound prose at least two things are indisputable: that it is disintegrative and that it is poetic. For the first term I draw on a piece of self-defence in the eleventh essay of 'I gather the Limbs of Osiris': the purpose of 'these rambling discourses' is to 'break up *cliché,* to disintegrate these magnetised groups that stand between the reader of poetry and the drive of it'. For *cliché* might be substituted *camouflage,* a prominent word in 'Studies in Contemporary Mentality'.

Today it might be called mystification, 'whether it be the timorous treadings of the "Spectator" . . . or the epilepsy of the chapel, or the plot full of lacunae, it all goes into camouflage' over real drives, sex, religion (or lack of it), or politics. The cure for camouflage is *realism.* On this Pound expatiates with reference to cartoons in the *Family Herald,* an example of his capacity for dealing with evidence with a shining freshness. Humour is a form of realism.

> The 'joke', the humorous anecdote, is usually a minute dénouement, it is a letting of the cat, usually an almost infinitesimal cat, out of the bag . . . Nobody minds what little Mary said to the Curate. Realist literature is a letting out of the big cat. It is giving away the gigantic, or established show, when the show is an hypocrisy; it is giving away with an ultimate precision . . . The realist novelists let out the cats of modernity, many forms of many oppressions, personal tyrannies, and group tyrannies. The slime will not tolerate the great gestes; they insist on the dribble of 'humour', as it is called; they like people who are 'funny'. Note, for example, that 'Punch' has never been on the side of a minority. It is, for all its pleasantry and nice behaviour, the most cowardly organ in England.
>
> (*New Age,* 11 October 1917)

The poetry of Pound's prose is a difficult subject; let me only point to characteristic passages. One of the best examples is too long to quote, the prose poem in chapter 9 of *Guide to Kulchur* that begins 'CIVILIZATION, to define same . . .' Instead, here is an extract, slightly shortened, from the sixth essay of 'I gather the Limbs of Osiris'

> Among the poets there have been four men in especial virtuous, or, since virtues are so hard to define, let us say they represent four distinct phases of consciousness:
>
> Homer of the Odyssey, man conscious of the world outside him: and if we accept the tradition of Homer's blindness, we may find in that blindness the significant cause of his power; for him the outer world would have a place of mystery . . . ;

E

> Dante, in the 'Divina Commedia', man conscious of the world within him;
>
> Chaucer, man conscious of the variety of persons about him, not so much of their acts and the outlines of their acts as of their character, their personalities; and with the inception of this sort of interest any epic period comes to its end;
>
> Shakespeare, man conscious of himself in the world about him—as Dante had been conscious of the spaces of the mind, its reach and its perspective.

I should like to assume that the value of such a passage is self-evident; it has some of the quality of 'E.P. Ode pour l'élection de son sépulcre' and also shares a quality with it which under certain conditions is a drawback; it is a capacity for fictionalising, which is all right with some material (the self, or literature), but not always: on society and politics Pound's Detail can have the Luminosity of neon.

Mr. Cookson's selection contains much material on society and economics, so I shall consider a characteristic example of Pound hitting difficulties.

In his essay called *What Is Money For?* (1939) Pound argues that capital as administered by the 'demoliberal usurocracy' has gnawed into the natural rights of property ownership. He lists a series of 'men of good will', who know the facts, 'above parties': Lenin ('quoting Hobson'), Hitler, Wyndham Lewis, Mussolini, C. H. Douglas and McNair Wilson. The alignment of the figures is disingenuous. It is true that section eight of Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917), from which Pound quotes, is about how a *rentier* class enriches itself from dividends and exploits colonial labour; he was indeed writing about the division of the world into usurer states (his term) and debtor states. But is Pound right to say that the same substance can be found in Hitler, in a quotation 'magnificently isolated by Wyndham Lewis'? This quotation epigraphises Lewis's chapter on economics in his *Hitler* (1931). It is about the distinction between production capital and loan capital (*Das Leihkapital*), but I think the post-World War I debates repudiated by Hitler are not really in parallel with what Lenin is talking about. More importantly, it was crucial to the arguments of Hitler and Wyndham Lewis to *dissociate* the National Socialist critique of capitalism from the 'state disintegrating teachings of the Jew Karl Marx' (Lewis, p. 175, quoting Hitler), in whose line Lenin obviously stands. Possibly the disparity is to Pound's purpose: even such different ideologies unite against usurious capitalism. But the difference between National Socialism and Lenin's communism are more important. One difference, voiced by Lewis in *Hitler*, leads to a key Poundian fallacy. Lewis contrasts world-pictures, that of the communist painted in crude coal-black colours, that of Hitler, laughing and gay, promising a Golden Age only delayed by the parasitic *Leihkapital*. He praises the optimism of National Socialism, which derives from a sense of potential bounty. This idea appealed to Pound; it was derived from or enforced by his contact with the Social Crediter, C. H. Douglas. Lewis expressed the idea thus: 'The amount of power available for productive work in England, for instance in 1800 was all told only about the equivalent of what any moderate-sized power station has today at its disposal. If this immensely multiplied power and skill we now possess, thanks to the constantly perfected techniques of industry, were made full use of, a large proportion of the population would literally have no work to do at all. You would have to find them work—hand industries could be brought back or something of that sort' (Lewis, pp. 187–88). This is plain Social Credit doctrine, which had at its root an idea of what might be called an energy leak. Potential abundance, as described by Douglas, was what society would be credited with—once the financiers stopped draining off the power of the machine. The idea was a plausible one: there was plenty of waste to be seen in the late twenties and plenty of technological innovation; there were moral discoveries that could be related to it —that, for instance, there was no value inherent in honest toil, and probably no economic value. But the idea remains balderdash, first because a precise statement was never made of what resources were potentially available, and second because a vast tract of socio-economic experience was evaded by the idea. One of the most authoritative accounts of Social Credit is in C. B. Macpherson's *Democracy in Alberta: Social Credit and the Party System* (Toronto, 1953; second edition, 1962). Professor Macpherson drily surveys the unproved claims made for energy resources, and deals with the tract of life evaded by the Social Crediters, which is *labour*, described by them only as energy, not as men and women in relation to employers. The point of Social Credit was to circumvent this view of labour. How could it be otherwise when Douglas defined capitalism 'not as a system of administration at all; [but] a system of fixing prices in relation to costs?' This view enabled him to propose a reform of capitalism without an alteration in the relation of labour to capital: 'To do this, of course, it was necessary to overlook the fact that wages are prices; recognition of this would have brought the relation of employers and employed squarely back into the centre of his own definition of capitalism' (Macpherson pp. 115–16). Douglas jumps the question of labour relations by offering the promise of a good life of shorter working hours, the reward of properly used technology.

Douglas leaves out labour, but at least pursues the significance of technology. Pound was sensitive to technology, an aspect of his modernism from which we could perhaps learn more ('Microphotography (ut dicta) shd. open up vast reaches of music', *Guide to Kulchur,* chapter 38), but I do not think it makes much impact on his economics. Like Douglas he sees overproduction and waste; his observation is given the allure of metaphor—'Nature habitually overproduces. Chestnuts go to waste on the mountain side, and it has never yet caused a world crisis' (*ABC of Economics*). But he does not work out how to attain industrial controlled abundance except by monetary means; he leaves out the workers. His interest in them extends to rewarding the will of the determined worker and finding the right harness for those 'with no sense of responsibility'. 'The science of economics will not get very far until it grants the existence of will as a component; i.e. will toward order . . .' (Cookson, pp. 208 and 210). *Will, directio voluntatis* and *virtù* point to a strong strand in Pound's thought. It appears in 'I gather the Limbs of Osiris': 'in each soul there is some one element which predominates, which is in some peculiar and intense way the quality or *virtù* of the individual'. Later he argued, in 1937, that the mediaeval conception of *virtù* may be recovered through Confucius and his commentator Thseng-Tseu in *Ta Hio: The Great Learning* (see Cookson p. 28 and 90). I doubt the usefulness of this idea in socio-economic matters, again finding relevance in Professor Macpherson on the Social Crediters. The Douglas doctrine had some success in Canada in the 1930s, taking over from a similar movement promoted earlier by U.F.A. (United Farmers of Alberta). Both Social Crediters and U.F.A. stressed will and individual enterprise, one having developed from a pressure group of small farmers and the other from a successful and energetic engineer. Professor Macpherson comments that both farmer and engineer (one might add 'poet', too) are engaged 'in direct purposive transformation of the physical environment . . . [they read] into the nature of society their own relation to economic society, [and] are apt to think of society as naturally purposive, the product of intelligent human wills. So, when confronted with a society which plainly and notoriously does not conform to any pattern desired by normal human wills, they see it as a conscious disruption of the natural order by some other wills thwarting theirs . . .' (Macpherson, p. 100). So they retreat from analysis, and resort to detection of conspiracy; farmer, engineer, and, in Pound's case, poet play the organ of the phantom of the opera.

These 'pellets' (Lenin, Hitler, Wyndham Lewis, etc.) just cannot be put together. The passing mention of J. A. Hobson ('V.I. Lenin, quoting Hobson') in the same section also warrants comment because in his thought may be seen the legitimate development of some Poundian assumptions. In the late 1880s Hobson proposed a critique of industrial finance with some resemblance to the 'energy leak' theory. In the language of economists Hobson was an under-consumptionist or in his own an enemy of 'over saving'. He attacked the retention of profit in industry and the idea that 'the saving of the individual must always and necessarily enrich the Community'; on the contrary, 'the undue saving of individuals impoverishes the Community, simultaneously lowering Rent, Profit, or Interest and Wages', to quote the Preface to *The Physiology of Industry: Being an Exposure of Certain Fallacies in Existing Theories of Economics* (1889, with A. F. Mummery). At the international level the idea of Britain saving illimitably could be maintained only as long as she could sell illimitably. It could not survive when her foreign markets (which had been created not for industrial benefit or human welfare, but for the enrichment of Lenin's *rentiers*) were challenged by other countries competing on equal or superior terms. Hobson analysed foreign markets at first-hand, notably as a correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* in South Africa in 1899. His first full account of his theory, in relation to trade and war-mongering, appeared in *Imperialism* (1902), a major acknowledged source for Lenin. One of several facts about Hobson that are significant for Pound studies is that his heretical premise was worked out in Ruskinian terms, firstly in *John Ruskin, Social Reformer* (1898). Pound is superior about Ruskin—'well-meaning, but a goose. The remedy for machines is not pastoral retrogression'—as is Hugh Kenner, whom Mr. Cookson quotes in his Introduction: 'Ruskin's remedy, a return to handicraft was wrong' (Cookson, p. 94 and 12). But Ruskin did *not* gloss over the problems of labour relations and Hobson's theory of them, in, for example, *Work and Wealth* (1914), explicitly developed from him.

It is time to withdraw from one instance of what seems to me Obfuscating Detail and explain that this hole-picking has been undertaken partly to prepare for a word of criticism of Mr. Cookson's selection of the prose. In his Introduction he does not entertain the kind of question I have been raising. He makes Pound into rather a closed circuit. The *Cantos* are obviously major, but for Mr. Cookson the prose writings are seen mainly as explicatory of them. Rightly, though, he says that the subject-matter of the *Cantos* is important in itself; wrongly he does not encourage thought about those peers of Pound who, even if not poets or known to him, made a contribution to his subject. Some of the best attempts to come to terms with Pound have paid him the compliment of realism, approaching him by considering what it was possible for intellectuals of related traditions to achieve. William M. Chace is good in this respect in his *Political Identities of Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot* (Stanford, 1973), his sense of what an intelligentsia can be deriving partly from Edmund Wilson, a 'patrician 1930s liberal'. It is to be hoped that Chace will be followed by an attempt to assess Pound on his central subjects in the context of European literary-political dissent. Is it not time that discussion was started which tries to assess Pound as a member of the gallery that includes such creative fighters, of different persuasions, as Karl Kraus and Benedetto Croce? Pound liked a passage by Allen Upward, which he quoted in his review of Upward's *The Divine Mystery* which describes an African medicine-man:

> He was more quick than other men to feel the changes in the atmosphere; perhaps he had rendered his nervous system more sensitive still by fasting or mental abstraction; and he had learned to read his own symptoms as we read a barometer. So, when he felt the storm gathering round his head, he put on his symbolical vestment, and marched forth to be its Word, the archetype of all Heroes in all Mysteries.

Mr. Cookson sees Pound as an archetype of all Heroes in all Mysteries, without the slight irony that Upward gives the phrase.

I began by proposing that there is such a thing as a Pound prose which we need to define. Again, I do not find Mr. Cookson an ideal guide because to do justice to the mode selection from Pound's full-length works is necessary; this would also give a slightly better picture of the range of Pound's intelligence by showing him on more subjects —on drama (say, something from the brilliant chapter on 'The Quality of Lope de Vega' in *The Spirit of Romance*), or on tragedy, or painting, or more of Pound on music, as a reviewer, other than the 'Treatise on Harmony', which has been shown to be interesting but tendentious by the American composer Ned Rorem in his introduction to the 1968 New York reprint. But this is to call for something like John Hayward's old *Selected Prose* of T. S. Eliot, or on the lines of Noel Stock's selection, *Impact: Essays on Ignorance and the Decline of American Civilization* (Chicago, 1960), whose introduction is still worth reading (it has useful hints on the Pound prose, including a comparative reference to Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentia*). However, Mr. Cookson certainly does not put himself before Pound and his purposes must be respected. His selection is substantial. He gives us about four hundred pages of matter, divided into eight parts, on religion, music, Chinese thought, America, 'Civilization, Money and History', poetry, and a group of essays on Pound's contemporaries; the first section gives an abbreviated version (six out of twelve articles) of 'I gather the Limbs of Osiris'. Besides short pieces the selection provides six whole pamphlets: 'The Treatise on Harmony' (1924), *ABC of Economics* (1933), *What Is Money For?* (1939), *Money Pamphlets by £ Number One: An Introduction to the Economic Nature of the United States* (1950), *Gold and Work* (1952) and *A Visiting Card* (1952); the last three of these are translations of pieces published first in Italian in 1942–44. Besides 'Osiris' we have, of journal series, 'The Approach to Paris' (1913, two out of seven articles), 'Affirmations' (1915, one out of nine), and all four articles of 'Provincialism the Enemy' (1917). There are extracts from two compilations: five pieces from *The Exile,* Pound's own journal that lasted for four issues in 1927–28, and the introduction to his *Active Anthology* (1933), which set out 'an assortment of writers . . . in whose verse a development appears', meant as a companion to the more retrospective 1933 collection called *Profile: An Anthology Collected in MCMXXXI.*

A few complaints can be made about *Selected Prose 1909–1965.* Little information is given about context, bibliographical or otherwise. All the pieces are dated correctly, though there is the occasional muddle. The essay on the Jefferson-Adams letters is noted as the *North American Review* version (Winter 1937–38), but is actually the compressed text from *Impact* (unless Gallup is mistaken), and then mistranscribed. We are not told that

'Osiris' essays begin with the second of the series, or much about the original form of any of the series, or that one of the extracts from *The Exile* (pp. 184–85) was a statement of editorial programme in the first number; it has been clipped of three paragraphs and a title invented for it. Throughout titling is slightly unreliable and paragraphing is awkward. For example, the 'Treatise on Harmony' is shorn of all its chapter headings. But space so saved gives more Pound.

University of Sheffield I. D. MacKillop

RETICENCE

Dorothy Richardson. A Biography. By Gloria Fromm. University of Illinois Press, 1977; £10.50.

Reticence was a determining force in the life and work of Dorothy Richardson. Her extreme sense of privacy refused the slightest biographical information to the public; even the fact that she was born in 1873 in Abingdon, near Oxford was not established until Joseph Prescott, preparing an *Encyclopedia Britannica* entry in 1950, wrested the information despite her protested 'deep-rooted suspicion of facts'. She persistently eluded researchers, substituting for the information they requested the vaguest sketches of her life and bad-tempered discussions of the term 'stream of consciousness'. (The first application of William James's phrase to literature was in May Sinclair's review of a portion of Richardson's thirteen volume novel sequence, *Pilgrimage*.) Since Richardson's death in 1957, Gloria Gilkin Fromm has been the chief detective tracking down facts about the long life of this intelligent and original yet remote and difficult writer. From the papers held by Rose Odle, Richardson's sister-in-law and literary executor, Fromm traced clues to primary historical sources—county registers, friends and relatives, and discovered Dorothy's youngest sister, Jessie Abbot Hale, living (until her death in 1962) in Texas. From their accounts and documents, from the Richardson Papers at Yale, and from other letters to Richardson's many regular correspondents, Gloria Fromm assembled the first full report of Richardson's life which she published in *PMLA* in 1963. The few subsequent Richardson critics have drawn on Fromm's work, as has John Rosenberg, author of the lucid centennial biography that appeared in 1973. Rosenberg's book, gracefully written and well-shaped, supplants the few earlier and more poetic accounts of Richardson, but Gloria Fromm has now produced the definitive archival biography. This is not a critical biography; it attempts no assessment of the fiction. Nor is its strength theoretical. Fromm thoughtfully organizes the most extensive data yet garnered about Richardson. Her even, objective tone invites confidence in the reliability of her account. This work of restraint and careful judgment, which itself largely refrains from shaping its portrait by critical or psychological analysis, will be the major resource for more speculative critics in the future.

As she intended, Fromm has established the close parallel between Richardson's experiences and those of Miriam Henderson, the heroine whose single point of view dominates the entire narrative of *Pilgrimage,* and has demonstrated that the other characters emerging from the haze of Miriam's perceptions are also drawn from life models. Fromm provides some clues to the imagination of the author who has created the peculiarly limited and limiting consciousness that controls this original fiction. Although Richardson has been clearly acknowledged an important technical innovator in the history of the novel (with Proust and Joyce, and Virginia Woolf who felt her influence) both popular sales and critical appreciation have been impeded by the difficulty of reading her work and by what Leslie Fiedler has straightforwardly confronted as her dullness. Her success has been in the integrity with which she shaped the narrative form of her fiction to the narrowly delimited perceptions of her heroine, and in the imagistic brilliance with which she renders discrete sense impressions. Her ultimate shortcomings as an artist, which must also be addressed, are entangled with the persistent reticence that constrains her own sensibility and arbitrarily limits the consciousness to whose form she devotes her fiction, and whose depths she fails to portray.

A shadowy construct that has beclouded the small body of Richardson scholarship is one that she herself invoked—the notion of feminine consciousness, which her friend John Cowper Powys made central to his 1931 encomium, and which has haunted Richardson criticism ever since. Fromm's teacher, Leon Edel, in a sympathetic study, assumes that it is the feminine nature of her consciousness that makes Richardson's fiction so opaque and difficult. This misconception, which equates the obscure and unknowable with the feminine, originates, perhaps, in Richardson's declaration that she wanted 'to produce a feminine equivalent of the current masculine realism'. Rejecting the conventions of external, material observation in the work of Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy, she wanted to write a novel of feminine sensibility that would attend to 'the little real everyday things' about which she held men ignorant and that would give itself to the rather shapeless form of felt experience. Virginia Woolf has declared that Richardson invented 'the psychological sentence of the feminine gender . . . of a more elastic fibre than the old, capable of stretching to the extreme, of suspending the frailest particles, of enveloping the vaguest shapes'. But 'female consciousness' is a vague concept, in the hands of both Richardson and her critics; it obscures more than it clarifies. Richardson rigidly polarized male and female modes of thought (and rather despised both). Men, she felt, obsessed with action, insist on rigid logical and causal arguments that belie the truth of experience. Richardson wanted to reach a more authentically female mode of awareness by avoiding a dominating narrative presence. Disdaining the controlling, fact-ridden voice with which the male ego imposed its shaping intelligence on fiction, she refused even to select and rank her detailed observation in such a way as to impose meaning or create coherence. Her determination to avoid what she sees as male egotism, however, masks an avoidance of self-assertion that becomes another form of aggression. Her refusal to establish significance leaves her reader baffled before masses of untransmuted materials that are not apprehended as the chaos of life, demanding shape, but as considerably less than life. Not only does Richardson avoid the transcendent patterning of conventional devices of plot and characterization, but she also refuses to give herself entirely to the flux of awareness and feeling and so fails to develop alternative structures of aesthetic form. Precisely what Virginia Woolf claims that Richardson's prose achieves, it does not; 'Miss Richardson has fashioned her sentence consciously, in order that it may descend to the depths and investigate the crannies of Miriam Henderson's consciousness. It is a woman's sentence, but only in the sense that it is used to describe a woman's mind by a writer who is neither proud nor afraid of anything that she may discover in the psychology of her sex'. While Richardson faithfully follows the alogical windings of consciousness to a point, she is stopped short by rigid walls through which she never penetrates. A whole range of sexual and passionate feeling finds no expression in her prose or in her heroine's awareness. Miriam might well be living in a nineteenth century novel, Walter Allen observes, though the more traditional narrative structures of novelists like Charlotte Brontë, whose *Villette* influenced *Pilgrimage,* permit greater access to those feelings that Richardson evidently held at bay in her life as well as in her fiction.

Early on in *Pilgrimage,* Miriam stands in the drawing room of a house where she is a governess, looks at the women whom she does not wish to join, and wonders, 'Who had made them so small and cheated and for all their smiles so angry? What was it they wanted? What was it women wanted that always made them so angry?' But Richardson is ultimately unable to probe that question. In her history of British women novelists, Elaine Showalter suggests that many women writers, including Richardson and Woolf, were unable to confront their own aggression, rage, grief and sexuality; repelled by the violence of ego, they retreated from adult sexuality and from the world. This emotional constriction limits Richardson's work. In *March Moonlight*, the posthumous coda to *Pilgrimage,* Richardson writes of 'the past. Inexhaustable wealth. Inexhaustable remorse. . . . If one could fully forgive oneself, the energy it takes to screen off the memory of the past would be set free'. Neither that energy nor that past is fully set free in her fiction. Her prose becomes a screen that hides as much as it reveals. The consciousness portrayed in Richardson's fiction is obscure, not in its femaleness, but in its artificial constriction. Refusing to have a dominating narrator, Richardson uses her reticence to develop a new narrative technique. As a *T.L.S.* review proclaimed, she is 'singularly uncompromising in her pursuit of reality'. But the reality her narrative follows is the internal flow of thought, not feeling. She traces the sensory and verbal, the rational and analytic levels of consciousness; from deeper emotional recesses, she refrains.

Both Richardson's fiction and Fromm's biography show the effects of this pervasive reticence. While most modern autobiography gives the intense dramas of childhood a central place, Richardson chooses to start her autobiographical fiction with Miriam's first act of independence, her decision to leave home at seventeen. Her childhood appears only in memoried glimpses of a 'paradise lost', distanced by time and narrative, as most intense feelings are kept distant in this novel. The most significant events occur somewhere in the background of the narrative, from which we are separated by a veil of prose. The suicide of her mother, while in twenty-two-year-old Dorothy's sole care at a beach resort, is presented obscurely in an ending to the third volume, *Honeycomb,* which Richardson only reluctantly added when her publisher insisted that the text she had submitted was incomplete. The possibilities for Fromm's portrait are also limited by the distance at which Richardson apparently kept so many of the psychic events of her life.

Fromm's account of Richardson's childhood does trace what Dorothy Richardson saw as the two conflicting strains in her temperament: the stern puritan heritage of her father's family of tradesmen, and the more superficial but frank and lighthearted cheer of her mother, which turned, in the course of her marriage, into the steadily increasing and debilitating depression of many Victorian wives. Dorothy was the third of four daughters; her disappointed father often called her 'son'. Having achieved his determination to ascend from trade to the status of gentleman, Charles Richardson was only intermittently successful at sustaining his family in the style embodied by their gracious house in Abingdon (whose garden provides a mystic centre in Dorothy's memory), but which they were forced to leave when she was eight. Family life was ruled by the unstable rhythms of Charles Richardson's financial successes and failures, and the consequent moves away from and to houses with gardens and tennis courts and musical salons. In 1890, when financial troubles were severe, Dorothy answered a newspaper advertisement and took a position teaching in a girls' school in Germany. When she was twenty, her father was declared bankrupt. After her mother's suicide, and the marriage of her oldest and youngest sisters, family life and easy ways of living receded into Dorothy Richardson's past, and she established a rather impoverished but independent life in London, living in boardinghouses, working in a dentist's office.

Independence was always a central concern for Richardson. Determined to maintain her integrity, she spent much of her energy in resistance. While she tried journalism and wrote for *The Saturday Review* and *The Dental Record,* she did not start work on *Pilgrimage* until she was forty. To remain independent she kept a certain distance from others. With those who were important to her in London, she experienced a conflicting attraction and avoidance of relationship. She satisfied the demands of two friends who wanted her love, Benjamin Grad and Veronica Leslie-Jones, by encouraging their marriage to each other. Freed from the constraints of conventional family life, she lived for a while on the edge of Bloomsbury, near the British Museum, where she read for hours, and she talked endlessly with the intense and intelligent Russian Jewish immigrant, Benjamin Grad (who appears as Michael Shatov in the novel). She visited Fabian-Socialist and anarchist groups in London, but with ideas, as with people, she held commitment at a distance. She had disliked her father's style of cold rationality and rejected all she considered hard, logical thought and blind idealism. When she met H. G. Wells, the husband of a school friend, she spent many weekends at their country home and was introduced to the literary life. Fromm sees the book reviews and essays Richardson started writing in 1906 as a continuing dialogue with Wells. Even before Wells became her lover, Richardson developed her thinking by opposing his many strong opinions, criticizing his 'scientific socialism' which, like his fiction, she felt had insufficient regard for the individual. Though the experiences of her London years anchored Richardson's 'lasting assent to socialism', she accepted Wells's appellation for her as a Tory-Anarchist. Defining herself primarily by opposition, Richardson was always vague in articulating her intellectual, political and aesthetic positions (never, therefore, clearly delineated in this biography).

In Wells, Richardson found an embodiment of her dominant, dominating men, 'all hard angry bones, always thinking something', with an egotistical drive to impose their vision of order on ideas and on people. Richardson was one of many mistresses for Wells, but he was a singular figure for her; his influence lasted throughout her lifetime. Fromm finds Hypo Wilson in *Pilgrimage* a penetrating, critical portrait of Wells. When Richardson miscarried his child, she fled London to recover in the country from her first virtual nervous breakdown. (Troubled by her faltering success as a novelist, she was to experience another at sixty-one. The only help she would then accept was from William MacMillan, a faith healer who, like the man she married, was childlike, much younger than herself, and no threat to her power.) Fromm comments on the low sexual intensity of the relationship of Wells and Richardson, suggesting that like Miriam's, Richardson's 'passions [were] never strongly sexual in nature,' an evasive treatment of the repression that seems to have been significant in limiting Richardson's aesthetic effectiveness.

Richardson felt she could be most herself alone, without the pressures and demands of other personalities, freed to contemplate her experience and come to the kind of clear, intense apprehension possible only in solitude. This habit of mind and feeling causes some critics, like Caesar Blake, to think of her *Pilgrimage* as a mystic quest, which may be more telling than regarding it as a psychological novel. The sketches she wrote after living with a Quaker family in Sussex reveal the relief she found in their serenity and shelter from the too intrusive world. Her two books about the Quakers show her attraction to their search for 'a centre of being where one might remain, remote and impersonal, and yet see freshly all the time'.

Richardson's fiction provides space for her fresh perceptions of what she called 'current existence, the ultimate astonisher'. She finally balanced her needs to preserve a remote centre of being, yet avoid total isolation when, at forty-four, she married the tubercular twenty-nine year old artist, Alan Odle. Odle's sardonic sketches, reminiscent of Hogarth and Beardsley, seem to dwell in the dark world of macabre emotions that Dorothy Richardson took care to avoid. With him, as with her father, she shared a dislike of women. When they married, Alan was not expected to live long; Richardson's solicitude for his health became one of the dominating concerns of their marriage which lasted until Odle's death in 1948. Gloria Fromm suggests that the maternal relation, which threatened no violation of her inmost self, was the easiest for Richardson to sustain with men. Though Odle was seemingly incompetent at all the material affairs of life, from daily upkeep to earning money, he did not make the psychic demands that Richardson felt as threats to her privacy or freedom, and their relationship became a stable one. She devoted herself to their domestic routine and made all of their practical decisions. In the first ten years after her marriage, she published six volumes of *Pilgrimage*, short stories, poems, essays, book reviews and criticism of film, a medium in which she found parallels to her own narrative style.

Though Richardson came to be recognized as a significant innovator in the novel, her financial rewards and critical acclaim were never substantial. An annuity from her friend Winifred Bryher eventually gave her material help. In the 1940's her writing came slowly and with difficulty. Time spent doing translations from the French and German to earn money fed her hesitations and helped delay the writing of the latter volumes of her novel. In *Vanity Fair,* in 1925, she writes that women artists are continuously struggling against the pressures of human demands on their time which they are raised to be unable to ignore. Fromm suggests that she failed to recognize her need for praise and its importance to her work.

The major task of nearly all Richardson's adult years was her *Pilgrimage*. At forty she had started work on her autobiographical novel. When she died at eighty-four in a nursing home near London, she was still working on the final portion in which Miriam marries and begins to write a fictional account of her life. It was in the act of contemplating, intensifying, writing that her life had the sharpest meaning for her; at the same time, with its demands for isolation, writing became another facet of her continuing conflict over living and keeping life at a distance.

Fromm purposely keeps Richardson's novel at a distance to establish the independent shape of the life. The biography and fiction are mirror images reflecting reciprocal absences. Since *Pilgrimage* shows us everything through Miriam's eyes, there are gaping holes in the information about other people's characters and the world outside her, and wide (though diminishing) spaces in Miriam's understanding of herself. Constrained by the external facts of Richardson's life, as Richardson was by her perceptions of them, Fromm traces a portrait that only suggests the inner complexities and reserves of Richardson's character. She mentions Richardson's 'irascible dogmatic' temperament and the magnetism that drew to her lasting friends, but she fully demonstrates neither. She too refuses to impose a definitive shape on her subject matter. As a consequence, by avoiding the possible distortions of a single analysis, she presents a thorough and reliable record. She tells us the most that is known about Dorothy Richardson, while making clear how much we do not know, and how much Richardson was unwilling to know or to have known. While Fromm does not inquire whether Richardson's reticence and determined independence become limitations that constrict the success of her genuinely original fiction, Fromm's biography provides the foundations on which such judgments can be grounded and debated.

University of Texas at Austin JOAN LIDOFF

The Critical Forum

HEAVEN LIES

In criticism it is necessary to make definite statements, many of which, however certain the commentator may be of their validity, are not tenable as certain in terms of the proveable. Such statements then may be deemed valid within parameters not of the certain but of the probable and the possible. With this situation and these terms in mind, I realise that Miss Sturrock's criticism (*E in C*, January, 1978) of my essay on Wordsworth (*E in C*, April, 1977) labours under the same difficulties that I have myself experienced.

The gravamen of her criticism is that I have made an 'argument . . . based largely upon falsification and strained interpretation'. Whereas I maintain that the child in *We Are Seven* is fantasying, Miss Sturrock says 'she is not doing so'. Since definition of terms is here pre-eminently important, I quote from *'A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms: a Guide to Usage'*, by H. B. and A. C. English (Longmans, 1958): *'Fantasy'*: n. imagining a complex object or event in concrete symbols or images, whether or not the object or event exists . . . [it] is usually pleasant and represents a sort of wish—fulfilment. Originally synonymous with imagination . . . it is now distinguished by the fact that, if it represents reality at all, it is whimsical or visionary, not primarily either constructive or reproductive. Yet it is not necessarily delusive or pathological'.—*'Fantasy-formation'*: daydreaming, in contrast with logical and and realistic thinking'.

The poem reveals quite clearly that this child rejects the generally received ideas about death which we can reasonably expect her to have *probably* encountered, even before rejecting Wordsworth's teaching. I say 'teaching' because, again, the *probability* is that we have here a child who has accepted the usual role of the child, i.e. is docile, even when with polite strangers. Although we can be *certain* that she has learnt to (for example) speak English, and to converse with strangers, we have to speculate imaginatively and sensibly as to what it is that limits her docility in accepting the reality of death. *Possibly* her mother may humour her fantasies on this subject, but there is no evidence that she has set out to delude her to the point of intransigence she has reached, so we must conclude that the *probability* is that her behaviour is prompted mainly by her own imaginative attempt at pleasant wish—fulfilment, the hall-mark of fantasy. She seems unaware of paradox in saying that her sister 'went away' and her brother 'was forced to go', and yet making it her practice to 'sing to them'. Thus she seems to give her own imagined and unrealistic meaning to the idea of death, and holds to this meaning with a tenacity characteristic of a habituated fantasy.

Miss Sturrock is quite correct in saying I have misattributed to Edward (in *Anecdote for Fathers*) what is in fact Wordsworth's own reminiscence of Kilve: 'Our pleasant home when spring began,/A long, long year before'. But my argument is not affected by this, since my point is that it is Wordsworth who is longing for the return of a happy situation beyond actual power of achievement—I mean, his blissful childhood. The earlier version of this poem increases the force of this point by the more personal 'My' of 'My pleasant home'. I should add here that the word 'spring' in the line quoted is effectively addressed metaphorically by the poet to himself. Miss Sturrock is right to correct me in saying that the child Edward is not longing for his former home, only expressing a preference. It is Wordsworth who longs for the spring-time of his lost golden age of childhood.

I have not made an 'innaccurate paraphrase' of that passage in *'It is a beauteous evening'* centering on the term 'Abraham's bosom', which the S.O.E.D. defines as 'in the abode of the blessed dead'. I have simply stressed the significance for Wordsworth, and the convenience, at a time of guilt and sorrow, of unconsciously and symbolically wishing his child in such an abode, a fantasy in which death is incidental and therefore a fantasy without morbidity or even malice, since (and here I must contradict Miss Sturrock) Wordsworth's prospects were in all probability, at the time of writing, of a separation from Annette and his illegitimate child 'for ever', and he wanted to bury an unhappy chapter of his past and marry Mary with a free conscience.

Finally, I would persist in saying that Wordsworth's line: 'the props of my affection were removed' (*The Prelude*, II. 292 ff.) is indeed connected with the death of his parents. A reading of the full contextual paragraph (1. 280 ff) shows this, in his memories of 'infant sensibility . . . Augmented and sustained' by his early 'dialogues with my Mother's heart'. He then goes on to use imagery of Nature (typically maternal for him) directly connected with his own 'watchful power of love' and his pleasure in 'permanent relations' with her. One is reminded of his allegiance to the 'permanent objects of Nature' and their association with the contrasting impermanency of his mother, he being shocked by her death when he was still a young child. The 'props of my affection were removed' may be ambiguous, but I can't agree that the common reading of this passage which I accept is either a falsification or strained interpretation.

We are concerned here, not just with the words and the contexts on the page, but the vital context of the experience written in the heart of a sensitive child who is his own father of himself as the sensitive man. His manner of living, thinking and fantasying reveal the fullest and most convincing meanings when we read them in that most vital and personal context of all.

Middlesex Polytechnic GERALD SOLOMON

Editorial Postscript

F.R.L. AND *E in C*: A RETROSPECT

The immediate link was, of course, *Scrutiny.* Without the encouraging example of *Scrutiny* there would never have been a periodical called *Essays in Criticism.* At most it would have been a tamer animal, subsisting precariously on lumps of sugar doled out occasionally in one or two publisher's advertisements. Of such well-meant tepidities the history of literary journals is full. *Scrutiny* was different. *Scrutiny* had teeth, if anything too many perhaps. *E in C* has also been known to bite. In the earlier issues I think particularly of my own short 'Elementary, my dear Hotson', John Peter on autobiographical elements in *The Waste Land*, Mark Roberts on Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, and somewhat later his long review of Helen Gardner's immature edition of Donne's *Songs and Sonnets.* Did we both live too dangerously? *Scrutiny*, if I remember correctly, ran for over twenty years—with the number of subscribers increasing from issue to issue. And *E in C* is now in its twenty-eighth year, still going strong.

The parallel is not exact, but both journals originated in a reform movement within its own university's English Faculty. *Scrutiny* was the direct Cambridge creation of Leavis and his wife (abetted by such exceptionally able critics as L. C. Knights, James Smith and D. W. Harding, with H. A. Mason later, a convert from Oxford's 'Greats'), but its ultimate origin was the doctrines of I. A. Richards in his Cambridge or *Practical Criticism* period. The rebellion, though not personally directed against Quiller-Couch, the then Professor of English Literature, or even Cambridge's critical off-shoots from Bloomsbury such as F. L. Lucas, was undoubtedly aimed at what they stood for. Oxford in comparison was then a haven of Edwardian peace —or lethargy. The successive Merton Professors of English Literature—Walter Raleigh, George Gordon, D. Nichol Smith, F. P. Wilson—might all have been mistaken for some such early nineteenth century worthy as W. P. Ker or E. V. Lucas. And the new appointments *c.* 1950—Lord David Cecil, Nevill Coghill—didn't change the pattern for

72689

the undergraduate, though it must be conceded that graduate studies at least became more 'scholarly' under Nichol Smith and Wilson.

The two most original minds in the Oxford English Faculty during the inter-war years were Tolkien and C. S. Lewis, but both were essentially self-centred and self-regarding. At bottom indeed both were primarily entertainers. The public was their oyster. Unlike I. A. Richards and Leavis, both 'prophets', each with his own following, Tolkien and Lewis must in the last resort be classified as lonely individuals, in spite of the superficial charm and the undeniable gaiety. Being unable, and certainly unwilling, to found a sect, or critical 'church', even to bequeath a methodology, their disappearance left a gap (Lewis transferred his services to Cambridge)—a gap that the 'organisation men', notably that adroit academic politician C. L. Wrenn, were quick to seize.

The house organ of Oxford's literary specialists became the *Review of English Studies*, a 'learned journal' originally founded by R. B. McKerrow in London, but on McKerrow's death taken over and subsidized by the Oxford University Press. It was then edited by a series of Oxford or Oxford-trained scholars, and their acceptance of an article by an aspiring academic would be likely to tip the balance in his favour when applying for a lectureship at a red-brick institution. I was lucky enough to be asked to edit the *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, a vantage-point which enabled me to see with my own eyes how uninterested in the 'criticism' of their allotted topic even the most distinguished 'scholars' of that distant epoch often were. One anecdote will suffice. I had persuaded Percy Simpson, who was joint-editor with Herford of the *Oxford Jonson*, to 'do' Jonson. As I had expected, the bibliography of Jonson's own writings when it arrived was exactly what *CBEL* required, but the 'Biography and Criticism' section had one curious omission. T. S. Eliot's essay, which was available since 1930 both in *The Sacred Wood* and the *Selected Essays*, had been left out. When I wrote to Simpson suggesting its inclusion it appeared he had never met the essay or heard of Eliot. And this was in 1932! He agreed, however, when he had read Eliot's essay that it was very interesting and should certainly be added to the section.

A part of my duty as the editor of *CBEL* was from time to time to report to the University Press on the work's progress. My wife (later to become *E in C*'s Business Manager) and I were already installed at Brill, and the trip gave me plenty of time to explore the Cambridge bookshops, where second-hand prices were lower than in Oxford. And one fateful afternoon I found myself inside Deighton Bell's shop in Trinity Street. There for half-a-crown I was able to buy the third number of *Scrutiny*, a journal hitherto unknown to me which I immediately found immensely congenial. On each suceeding visit to Cambridge I acquired the current number until I finally became a regular subscriber.

But it was the acquisition of that third number (Vol. I. No. 3. December 1932) that was the decisive event for me. I find I marked—and indexed on the cover—two or three passages, which turn out all to be by Leavis. They are all, prophetically, concerned with D. H. Lawrence, but here the necessary limitations have been recognized.

One of them occurred in a review of Lawrence's *Letters* (p. 274). It was 'one's sense that Lawrence was greater than his writings'. A second was in a notice rather than a review of the coloured facsimile of Blake's *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (p. 290), in which, though Lawrence's abstractions are deplored, they are seen as less destructive than Blake's and 'even *Women in Love* looks less like mere disaster'.

It is true that my admiration of Leavis was not immediately returned. His long and intelligent review of my slim *English Poetry and the English Language* in the June 1935 issue was the most unfavourable the book received, though I must admit hardly any reviewer anywhere did applaud it. I had not expected Basil de Selincourt of *The Observer* to love the book—and he didn't. But de Selincourt belonged to an older, earlier, pre-Eliot generation; I *was* disappointed not to have pleased Leavis. However I was determined not to take his displeasure lying down, and so I wrote immediately to ask him how many words *Scrutiny* could spare me for a retort. The answer was generous and friendly: I could have 2,000 words—which appeared in due course in the September 1935 number, where they were followed by an effective refutation by Leavis. The personal sting was alleviated, however, by the last sentence in Leavis's reply:

> And as for Mr. Bateson's book, I did not think it necessary to say in my review (what I say now) that I found it well worth disagreeing with and that I was grateful for the opportunity.

What had begun in an almost total disagreement ended, as it turned out paradoxically, in the beginning of a sort of friendship. Leavis and I were not to meet until 1950 or so, but we became aware of each other's existence and were occasionally able to help each other at a modest level.

That review of my book by Leavis was in a way the beginning of *E in C*. It made me realize that my confidence in the kind of fact-finding represented by *CBEL* was naïve, logically untenable, indeed *dishonest*, because it pretended to exclude 'value' from the process of literary communication. But then, I said to myself, was not 'fact' equally indispensable in the critical process? Were not Leavis and I both mistaken on this crucial theoretical issue—he in overrating literary criticism as the be-all and end-all, I in that book of mine overstating the case for literary history? Of the two biases I should now cast my vote for criticism, though I am less good at it myself than at history. The proper way to read anything, especially anything claiming to be literature, is to begin with the *text* and leave the *context*, and all those introductions, footnotes and appendixes until later (if at all).

Having made this concession to beginners in the business and to Leavis (who rarely gives the impression of being a beginner)—it still seems to me possible and desirable to encourage a university Eng. Lit. man to be both critic *and* historian, or (to put it another way) a *scholar-critic*. In the leaflet we distributed in 1950 in which we invited the academic or semi-academic public to subscribe to *E in C* we defined our general position as being half-way between *Scrutiny* and the *Review of English Studies*. The title we selected was intended to suggest Matthew Arnold—and via

Arnold Oxford (all the contributors to the first number were Oxford-trained, with the exception of T. S. Eliot, who had however spent a year in Oxford writing his thesis on the Oxford philosopher F. H. Bradley). And the 'criticism' that we offered in our title was intended to be less dogmatic than *Scrutiny*'s and less overloaded with dead facts than the typical academic journal—'essays' only. The kind of essay, the critical stance, was left undefined. But the implication was intended that a contribution to be acceptable must be one that Arnold would not have been ashamed of, one that at least, even if one of 'the weaker brethren' (as Eliot asserted) Arnold would have been prepared to read.

As an additional allurement I claimed in our brochure that the new Oxford periodical would be the only one in the whole world devoted to literary criticism. It seems an improbable enough statement today and it may well have been untrue even in 1950. But I only received one objection to the proposition. Interestingly this came from T. S. Eliot and was to the effect that 'the Cambridge journal *Scrutiny*' was surely entirely concerned with literary criticism. This was an easy one to answer. Hadn't *Scrutiny* published an extract from *Coolstone Park*, a novel by a certain C. H. Peacock (who also had three poems scattered over the first two volumes? Hadn't seven of Bottrall's poems been in the first eleven volumes? Hadn't there been a 'Musical Chronicle' in all the later numbers? But, of course, it was the *Scrutiny* literary criticism that mattered, and it was reassuring that Eliot recognized its high quality. There had been rumours that *The Criterion*, much respected but little read, resented its less mealy-mouthed Cambridge competitor. I even heard it suggested that an offensive phrase ('rotten and rotting others') that Eliot coined in a *Criterion* review of Middleton Murry's *D. H. Lawrence* really meant Leavis. (Eliot had asked himself what Lawrence would have turned into if he had gone to Cambridge and become a Cambridge highbrow). The context makes it clear that the supposition is general and not specific. It was the first hint that reached me of a persecution mania complex in the *Scrutiny* group.

The ambition to provide an Oxford critical voice for which *Essays in Criticism* might prove the mouth-piece had soon to be abandoned. It is true that John Holloway, who led off the first number with an article on Arnold, had recently published an exposition of the newest Oxford philosophy—that 'language' approach primarily associated with the brilliant and early-lost Austin. And it was great luck for *E in C* that I was able to extort a first-class article on *The Family Reunion* from Middleton Murry. The rest of the first number—and indeed of the whole of the first volume—did not amount to much. A. J. M. Smith, the Canadian poet then teaching at Michigan State (who for one useful year allowed him time off to function as *E in C*'s American Editor), had been able to rustle up for me some respectable American items, but of any emergent school of Oxford criticism there was hardly a glimmer during that first year. (I except Miss Mahood on Shakespeare's puns.)

Only two of the early articles strike me now as first-rate: Donald Davie on Landor, and Ian Watt on *Robinson Crusoe*. The disconcerting thing about these two articles—from the geographical point of view—was that, though there was no whiff of *Scrutiny* about them, these were incontestably Cambridge products.

The second volume (1952) was a great improvement in every respect. Of the twenty-six articles only seven were of Cambridge origin, eight came from Oxford, and eleven were contributed by Americans or members of the English Departments of other universities (including one from Czecho-Slovakia). And my personal relations, which had hitherto been cordial, became strained with Leavis. There were no doubt several reasons for this. One undoubtedly was the article by Martin Jarrett-Kerr, originally (I believe) of Oxford but by then a member of the Community of the Resurrection, an Anglican monastic order, that appeared in the October 1952 *E in C*.

Jarrett-Kerr's article ('The Literary Criticism of F. R. Leavis') still seems to me as good an account of Leavis's achievement as any I know. If anything it overstates the originality of that criticism. I should say that Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* is twice as good as any single work of Leavis's. And the short passage on Leavis's prose style understates the frequent clumsiness and occasional pretentiousness. Leavis's blind spots—the denial of poetic importance to both Auden and Milton, the curious terms of abuse ('Sunday reviewer', 'academic', etc.) are touched on briefly and with unfailing courtesy. It was distressing therefore to receive through the post Leavis's rejoinder 'The State of Criticism: Representations to Fr. Martin Jarrett-Kerr' (published in *E in C*, June 1953, pp. 215–33), in which J.-K's compliments are swallowed whole and the defects are defended at enormous length.

My own contemporary comment on the article and the rejoinder appears in the same issue of *E in C* (p. 234). *Inter alia* I wrote: '. . . Unlike Dr. Leavis I had been both surprised and impressed by the minuteness of the critical deflection that Fr. Jarrett-Kerr's Anglo-Catholicism seemed to impose. His essay . . . appeared to me a welcome indication that doctrinal differences need not now stand in the way of a literary *consensus gentium*'. I am still not certain that I was wrong. On the status of Auden at any rate I am impenitently on Jarrett-Kerr's side.

What is most immediately obvious today, if it was less so in 1953, is Leavis's class-consciousness. *Scrutiny's* enemy was not really, as Leavis thought, 'the weeklies, the Sunday papers, the B.B.C. and the British Council' (to which he added the universities). It was not even 'the system of institutional and social-personal relations' that controls these bodies. It was, much more generally, the Upper Class, an anomalous body into which access is available not only by birth but increasingly by education and the successful accumulation of wealth.

Leavis's failure to realize *Scrutiny's* political implications is illustrated by the gradual shedding of the left-wing reviewers he had inherited from the *Calendar of Modern Letters*, a short-lived journal he greatly admired—as I did too—and from a series in it from which he borrowed his journal's title. This political neutrality is proclaimed publicly in one of Leavis's earliest *Scrutiny* articles (December 1932) which has the amusing title 'Under which King, Bezonian?' (a quotation from Pistol in 2 *Henry IV*). It was perhaps this distaste for social issues that was really behind the attack on me in *Scrutiny*'s penultimate issue. I had not expected it.

The alternatives between which Leavis refused to choose in 'Under which King, Bezonian?' were Communism and the 'Royalism' with which Eliot was flirting at the time. The article was labelled 'Editorial' and presumably represented the agreed approach of all four editors (L. C. Knights, Denys Thompson, and an American called Culver as well as F.R.L.). What is astonishing to me, is the absence of *Democracy* from the discussion. The word does not occur once. I am not sure it does in my article either—it too had been circulated among *E in C*'s Editorial Board (it 'obtained the general approval of most of my colleagues'), but its emphasis on contrasting social contexts was clearly implicitly democratic.

I had not expected Leavis to find anything to growl about in my article, but what proved to be the penultimate issue of *Scrutiny* growled long and *loud* in his article 'The Responsible Critic'. The contrast with the tone of the 1935 exchange was distressing. In my article simply to illustrate the historical point that the Metaphysicals' imagery was sensuously concrete whereas Augustan imagery tended to be semi-abstract I quoted passages from Marvell and Pope that Leavis had collocated without apparently realizing that 'Head' and 'Heart' had this crucial difference in their respective contexts. By way of confutation Leavis proceeded to an ingenius paraphrase of Pope's lines. In my reply in the very last issue of *Scrutiny* I pointed out that Leavis's reading of the lines—which were from *Dunciad IV*—must be mistaken because they contradicted the Pope—Warburton note. To this his response was 'I (he must believe, though the news will clearly surprise him) had read the "Warburton-Pope" note'. It did indeed come as a surprise. If he was to propose a meaning so different from what his author said it was, he must surely record the fact. I suspect that any reading of those difficult and dreary notes had been, if ever, a long time ago.

In the end we agreed in effect to differ. When Leavis asked me if he might reprint my rejoinder to his 'The Responsible Critic' in the *Selection from Scrutiny* (1968) I, of course, agreed—provided that I might add a short rejoinder of my own. It will be found on pp. 315–16 of the second volume. My final paragraph runs:

> The corruption of a poet, according to John Dryden, is the generation of a critic. Into what, then, if the process continues, does criticism degenerate? Into 'appreciation', on the one hand, and 'bibliography' on the other. Either too subjective an approach (the defect of Dr. Leavis's virtue) or too much objectivity (the 'scholarship' that is more pedantry, to which I must often plead guilty). In so far as that is what he charges me with, I kiss his rod. But he must not hold it against me, a lesser man in an inferior English Faculty, if I too correct his occasional subjective excesses.

That the English Faculty at Cambridge was better than the Oxford one in those distant days, at any rate for undergraduates, I have no doubt is true. For his last three years at Cambridge Leavis did become a University Reader, whereas I never rose higher than University Special Lecturer, which may seem to confirm my description of myself as the 'lesser man'. I remember inserting the phrase because I thought it would please Leavis. I suppose *E in C* is also the lesser journal.

The first chapter in Eliot's *The Sacred Wood* dismisses Arnold in its third sentence as 'rather a propagandist for criticism than a critic'. Posterity, which will have forgotten me, will surely retain a niche for F.R.L. as one of the most effective propagandists for criticism this country has ever had.

F. W. BATESON

It is with profound regret that the editors record the death of F. W. Bateson on October 16th, 1978.

~~077842~~
077842

72689

Andrew Marvell
The Critical Heritage

EDITED BY ELIZABETH STORY DONNO

Professor of English, Columbia University, New York

Marvell's reputation as a major lyric poet and satirist has been slow to develop, a change in assessment which is traced chronologically through these selected extracts of criticism. Those quoted include Dryden, Milton, Voltaire, Lamb, Hazlitt, Poe, Arnold, Tennyson and T. S. Eliot. This is a splendid contribution to the tercentenary of Marvell's death, and to Marvell studies in general. 0 7100 8878 8, £8.95

Approaches to Marvell

The York Tercentenary Lectures

EDITED BY C. A. PATRIDES

The lectures published here were delivered at the University of York in 1977 and 1978 to mark the occasion of the tercentenary of Marvell's death in 1678. The contributors, including many of the finest and best-known scholars from both sides of the Atlantic, offer many fresh insights into the poet's works and ideas. In addition, John Dixon Hunt has contributed a fascinating study of Marvell and the garden. 0 7100 8818 3, £9.95 *October*

The Rule of Metaphor

Multi-disciplinary studies of the creation of meaning in language

PAUL RICOEUR

Universities of Paris and Chicago

In this full-scale examination of the philosophy of metaphor from Aristotle to the present, Paul Ricoeur brings together and discusses significant viewpoints on metaphor held by various disciplines, among them linguistics and semantics, the philosophy of language, literary criticism and aesthetics. Originally published in French under the title *La Métaphore Vie*, Professor Ricoeur's analysis of metaphor follows a widening path from the word through the sentence to language as discourse. 0 7100 8964 3, £9.50

James Joyce

A Student's Guide

MATTHEW HODGART

Visiting Professor, University of California, Los Angeles

James Joyce remains one of the most important and influential of twentieth-century novelists, but for all his universality, his novels are deeply rooted in the Irish experience. It is one of the distinctive features of Professor Hodgart's book that he discusses in detail the historical and cultural background from which Joyce sprang and within which he wrote. He then takes the student through all of Joyce's works, but far from being a methodical journey, the study is full of forceful ideas that even the reader who is familiar with Joyce's work will find refreshing and stimulating. 0 7100 8817 5 (cloth), 8943 0 (paper), £5.95, paper £2.95

ROUTLEDGE & KEGAN PAUL 39 Store Street, London WC1

72689=

19-10-83

Checked

Any Other

23.10.83

२३।१०।८२

23-10-83

23-10-83

Compiled
1999-2000